



THE
PATRIOTS

CYRUS
TOWNSEND
BRADY

LIBRARY

**UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO**

PS
1120
B5
P3
XX

Mrs. E. J. Hentel
— 1906





THE PATRIOTS



“ ‘It’s nothing,’ said her husband, ‘A bullet in my heart couldn’t hurt now that I have found you’ ”

(Page 219)

THE PATRIOTS

THE STORY OF LEE
AND THE LAST HOPE

BY
CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

AUTHOR OF

"THE SOUTHERNERS," "A LITTLE TRAITOR TO THE
SOUTH," "MY LADY'S SLIPPER," ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR
BY WALTER H. EVERETT



NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY
1906

COPYRIGHT, 1906, BY
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY

Published, February, 1906

*Dedicated to
John Barnett Knox
of Alabama, an American indeed whom
I am proud to call
my friend.*

PREFACE

“PATRIOTISM,” sententiously declares Dr. Samuel Johnson, “is the last refuge of a scoundrel!”

Yet there have been not a few indifferent honest men who confute the dictum of the tea-drinking lexicographer, in that their chiefest glory was in their love of country; as Washington and Grant, Lincoln and Lee—to name four of our greatest.

All these men are mentioned hereafter in these pages; two are merely referred to, a third plays a small but important part, while the whole romance revolves about the last. I have shown Lee in some of the supreme moments of his career: when he declined the chief command of all the armies of the United States to become a major-general in the Virginia line; when he took upon himself the blame for the fruitless assault at Gettysburg; when he would fain have led his men into the jaws of death, the veritable mouth of hell at Spottsylvania; and, lastly,—where character is most terribly tried,—in defeat at Appomattox.

In every situation he was a great, a dominant figure. The character of Lee has been somewhat lost sight of in the study of his career, but it fairly glows with all that is high and noble and true. The Bayard of the South exhibits the characteristics of the Christian gentleman to the full. His is a personality to be studied, to be followed, to be loved. In his greatness and in his simplicity he is an enduring inspiration to true manhood for all America—the world even.

I did not always think thus. Born amid the roar

PREFACE

of battle, the son of a brave Northern soldier, trained while yet the bitterness engendered during the conflict lingered in the memory, my youthful impressions, hard to eradicate as such ever must be, gave me quite another idea of the great Virginian, and one that was comprehended in an ugly word. Years of study and reflection gradually modified that conception, until I think differently now.

History has ever been my favourite study, and the American Civil War has engrossed a large part of my attention during my life. In addition to my already extensive researches in this field, in preparation for this book, I read, I believe, every life of Lee that has been published: I examined a great number of volumes of memoirs and magazine and other ephemeral articles in which references to him appear. I corresponded or conversed with members of the Lee family about certain disputed points. I have also discussed Lee with many ex-soldiers on both sides. These all have helped me make the picture. May those who knew him and loved him, those who fought with or against him, find my presentation a true one.

I shall not now discuss the oft-mooted question, which was the greater soldier, Grant or Lee? It is a fascinating theme which I hope some time to consider, but not now. Suffice it to say that there was greatness, and military ability, and high-souled conduct and character enough about each of these men to make us proud and glad that it was given to the same land to father them both. From the Rappahannock to Appomattox there was abundant illustration on both sides of every soldierly and personal quality in captains and men, to make us love to dwell impartially upon the story. And the appropriateness of the title I have selected for my novel I think no one will dispute to-day.

PREFACE

For the rest, some of the incidents in the double love story that follows—for be it remembered that primarily this is a romance, after all—are founded upon facts and, in part, at least, I do but tell the tale as it was told to me. As will be seen, the coloured brother plays some small part, too. Unwilling to trust my own ability to transcribe his speech, I availed myself of the service of a friendly expert—who shall be nameless—and submitted the matter to his critical judgment. The letter that follows accompanied the much corrected proof.

Sad'dy.

MY DEAR BRER BRADY,

Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Is anybody yever see de beat er dat! I grab my stummick 'n' laff, seh, twell I mos' bus'. It seem lek ter me dat when white fokes tries fer ter talk nigger fokes, dey sho' does 'splay der ignunce. Fo' Gawd, Brer Brady, I'se downright shame er you, dat's what I is, I'se downright shame er you.

Passin' de time er day wid you an' yo' fambly, I stay des lek I allers is,

Yo'n,

BRER RABBIT.

I insert this letter that the gentle reader may begin the book with a good laugh—at me, if not with me—and thus be in a proper frame of mind to look kindly on what follows.

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

TOLEDO, OHIO

Christmastide, 1905

CONTENTS

PRELUDE

	PAGE
THE PATH OF DUTY	xiii

BOOK I

IN THE VALLEY OF DECISION

CHAPTER

I ANSWERED	3
II "GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES!"	18
III FOR ARIADNE'S SAKE	33
IV THE DAY BREAKS	42
V AGE AND YOUTH—AND A WOMAN	51
VI "SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY"	58

BOOK II

THE TIMES THAT TRIED

VII THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA	69
VIII OH, THE WILD CHARGE THEY MADE!	79
IX THE PROPHET'S WORD	92
X THE AFTERMATH OF PAIN	102
XI THE SEARCH AMONG THE SLAIN	116
XII REVELATIONS	128

BOOK III

KATHLEEN

XIII THE DOUBLE TRUST	145
XIV A WRONG AMENDED	158
XV THE CHANGING CURRENTS	167
XVI THE REVELATION	176
XVII KATHLEEN REAPS WHERE SHE HAD NOT SOWN	184
XVIII THE BOOK OF THE HEART	192

CONTENTS

BOOK IV

ARIADNE

CHAPTER		PAGE
XIX	IN THE WILDERNESS	205
XX	A FORGOTTEN DUTY	214
XXI	A BRAVE MESSENGER	226
XXII	THE RISK IN THE RUSE	241
XXIII	A HEAVY PRICE	252
XXIV	THE MESSAGE IN THE DARK	263

BOOK V

"LEE'S MISERABLES"

XXV	THE MAN AGAINST THE GUN	279
XXVI	THE MERCY OF THE GREAT CAPTAIN	293
XXVII	THE SALIENT IN THE LINE	304
XXVIII	THE BLOODY ANGLE AT HELL'S HALF-ACRE	316
XXIX	AFTER SPOTTSYLVANIA	322
XXX	THE ROBINGS OF GLORY, THE GLOOM OF DEFEAT	333

POSTLUDE

THE PATH OF DUTY TO THE END	344
---------------------------------------	-----

ILLUSTRATIONS

“ ‘IT’S NOTHING,’ SAID HER HUSBAND, . . . ‘A BULLET IN MY HEART COULDN’T HURT NOW THAT I HAVE FOUND YOU.’”... ..	<i>Frontispiece</i>
“IT WAS ARMISTEAD. BEHIND HIM THE FLAGS AND A FEW, OH, GOD, A MERE HANDFUL OF MEN!”	<i>Facing page</i> 90
“ ‘GOOD-BYE,’ SAID KATHLEEN IN A WH’SPER; ‘I CAN’T HATE YOU; I MUST LOVE YOU.’”	“ “ 156
“IT WAS A WEIRD AND MYSTERIOUS PROGRESS, AS THE NIGHT FELL AND DARKNESS CAME.”	“ “ 264
“YOUTH WITH ITS PURPOSE, AGE WITH ITS KNOWLEDGE, THE WOMAN BETWEEN, THEY STOOD THEN STARING OUT UPON A STARRY FLAG.	“ “ 346

PRELUDE

THE PATH OF DUTY

IT was springtime in that city embowered in trees and flowers, Washington. An officer sat his horse on the gravel walk in front of a stately old Colonial mansion, with its high-pillared porch, which, from its coign of vantage on the high bluffs bordering the river, overlooked the Potomac and the white city upon the other side of the wide stream.

"You will be back for supper, Robert?" queried a handsome matron who stood beneath the portico looking down upon her husband.

"Yes, without fail."

"Do not let anything keep you, dear."

"I shall not."

"I feel so nervous in these unsettled times without you and . . ."

"I have only two persons to see, my dear," returned the horseman reassuringly, "Mr. Blair, who wrote me that he had a message from the President, and General Scott."

"Well, do not get to talking over old army experiences with the general and forget that I am waiting for you."

"No one could make me forget that," said the man, smiling pleasantly. Then his voice changed; he shook his head. "We will not talk over old army experiences now, Mary," he added, with a touch of sadness.

PRELUDE

"It is hard for you, I know," returned the woman, comprehending with wifely instinct the hidden meaning in the phrase, "but you must do your duty."

"Yes," answered the husband thoughtfully. "Duty." He paused. "It is the noblest word in the English language, I think . . . and the hardest. Good-bye. I shall be back for tea, do not fear."

He lifted his hat with chivalric courtesy and knightly grace, bent low before her, called a cheery good-bye to the children playing on porch or lawn and cantered slowly away. There was one word above duty in the feminine vocabulary, and that was love. It shone in the woman's eyes as she watched her soldier-horseman in the uniform of a lieutenant-colonel in the United States Army ride away from the green slopes of tree-clad Arlington. Yet the woman who stood there was of a race that would not hesitate to hold even its love as naught beside its duty.

Down the hill, across the long bridge, through the dusky outskirts, into the city and then to an office-building on Pennsylvania Avenue the horseman rode, busy with his thoughts. He was a person of no little importance, well known to the city of Washington, and although he was intensely preoccupied he did not fail to notice and invariably to return, not merely the perfunctory salutes of the soldiers, with which the town was already filling, but the formal recognitions of sundry citizens who claimed the honour of his acquaintance, as well as the more cordial bows from certain fair ladies who looked upon his goodly and handsome person with smiles of approbation, as they passed him in carriages or on foot, on the broad tree-shaded avenue.

He had been followed by a liveried negro on horseback, and to him he tossed the bridle as he went into the building. Long time he stayed there. He had

PRELUDE

been a grave, silent figure when he entered; he was graver and more silent when he came out.

Ambition is said to be the god of the soldier. Power, opportunity, had tempted this man's talent. Direct from the President of the United States himself, through one who stood near to him, had come an unequivocal offer to him of the highest position in his chosen vocation. Virginia had seceded. War would eventuate before many days. The command of the army of the United States, the chief, the supreme command, had been offered to this man who was then merely a lieutenant-colonel of cavalry—and he had refused it!

He was gifted with that imagination without which there is no greatness, the imagination which foresees, which men sometimes call prophetic. He could read the signs of the times. He could realise the deadly nature of the approaching struggle. No position had been offered him by any authority on the other side. He did not know that any would be tendered him. Certainly he could not hope for such a preferment there. Indeed he might be relegated to obscurity. He might not find favour with the powers that were shaping the destinies of the new Confederacy. His sword might rust in its scabbard. Against that possibility of oblivion he had received the assurance positive of such professional advancement, with its corresponding opportunities for glory and fame, as have rarely come to a soldier.

Rich, influential, possessed of all that could make life easy and delightful, this officer had clung to his military career from pure love of it. The blood of his father, the great light horseman, whose legions had been famed alike in the valleys of the Hudson and in the mountains of the Carolinas, was quick in his veins. He had remained the soldier even though

PRELUDE

his calling parted him from home, from those he cherished, his wife, his children, his friends, and sent him alone to the arid plains of Texas. He had loved—he did still love—that flag which he had carried to victory, that banner for which he had blazed a pathway through valleys and mountains of old Mexico.

Yet as he came out of that door he realised that he had refused definitely, even peremptorily, the command of the army of the United States! Irrevocably but not lightly, promptly but not carelessly, unequivocally but not indifferently, had he chosen. Back of his decision was that profound feeling of obligation, the sense of oughtness, that men call duty—that hard word which is spread on honour's guide post to point the way to service, God's and Man's. From a profound conviction that his allegiance lay with his native state, that his duty first was to her, he had chosen, and with almost a breaking heart.

Yet his feelings did not make him hesitate a moment as to his course. He had known from the first what his choice would be. There was no balancing of reasons pro and con; his convictions were clear and definite. Any other decision was as impossible to him as lying or theft. Virginia called him, the land of his fathers, the land of his wife, the land of his children, the land of his friends—his home. Whatever happened he was hers. He must be upon her side. He was a Virginian first, a citizen of the United States second. Virginia had been a state and his forebears had led in its councils and struggles long before the Articles of Confederation were dreamed of. The Old Dominion had the prior claim. His course was as clear as it was righteous to him. He was as truly patriotic as he was sincere in his belief.

He had one other duty to perform. In an office further in the city sat an old man, a huge belaced old

PRELUDE

veteran, who had fought for his country with brilliancy and courage and success in two great wars. This old soldier had been his commander. From him he had learned that practical part of the art of war which cannot be had from text-books. To him he must go. He had been on the old general's staff in Mexico, and the general had ever been his friend. It was to his recommendation that the offer from the President was due. Courtesy, duty, affection, all led him to the man who was then general-in-chief and whom he would have succeeded had he acceded to the President's request.

It was evidence of the urgency of the situation that, without any other formality than the announcement of his name, he was admitted instantly into the presence of the most punctilious and ceremonious captain of his times. The interview between the great chieftain and his brilliant subordinate was brief. This soldier, too, was a Virginian, but from his childhood he had been separated from his state. He had been a soldier for forty-three of his seventy-five years. There was no possibility of a change in his allegiance in his mind. To him the United States was all. To his subordinate Virginia occupied the highest place. Each man respected the other's feeling. There was no bitter argument between them, no recrimination, only a great sadness, a lasting regret. The younger man told the elder of his decision, thanked him for the good words he had spoken, declared his intention of resigning from the United States service, and bade him farewell.

He came out of that room with a heightened melancholy. He had looked his last upon his ancient captain. That veteran soldier was about to relinquish the duties of active service too exacting and arduous for his great age. From his well-earned retirement,

PRELUDE

as his life declined to its close, he was to watch with the interest of a master—and of a friend bereft—the great game of war about to be played, in which his old friend showed to such advantage—and sometimes in spite of himself to feel a thrill of pride perhaps at the brilliant strategy and tactics of his pupil!

And the heart of the younger man, who had ever looked up to and revered his former commander, whom he had served so brilliantly, was sad, too, when he thought that he should see him no more. He was heavy in the knowledge that he might some day be called upon to break up the other's plans, to turn the sword against him.

He was back again at Arlington in the evening, as he had promised—that Arlington he loved and which he must soon leave forever, that Arlington in which the spirits of his gallant forebears now mingle with the spirits of the brave who sleep in thousands 'neath its leafy aisles, upon its verdant slopes. The contented negroes came to meet their beloved master. His happy children clustered about him. Only that daughter of noble line who bore most worthily his name read beneath the unruffled brow, which he ever presented to adversity and sorrow, what was in the great heart.

A few days after an officer was received in state by the Legislature of Virginia in the capitol at Richmond. The soldier of Arlington had put off the uniform of the United States and was now clad in the modest grey clothes that indicated the service of Virginia. That Legislature, speaking for the state alone, had just created him major-general and commander-in-chief of her forces, and its members were now gathered to receive him as of old their forefathers had received George Washington. In words of graceful compliment they congratulated him and

PRELUDE

welcomed him. And to them Robert Edward Lee, as modest as his great prototype, his father's friend, made this simple reply:

“ Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Convention: Profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, for which I must say I was not prepared, I accept the position assigned me by your partiality. I would have much preferred had the choice fallen upon an abler man. Trusting to Almighty God, an approving conscience and the aid of my fellow-citizens, I devote myself to the service of my native state, in whose behalf alone will I ever again draw my sword.”

It is only the voice of ignorance, of malice, that dares to call this man a traitor.

BOOK ONE

In the Valley of Decision

THE PATRIOTS

CHAPTER I

ANSWERED

LESS subtle than the woman, the man's thoughts were entirely obvious—and they spelled adoration! If one had sought to discern from her outward manifestations what emotions her breast tabernacled, mockery mingled with merriment would have been apparent. She stood above him—the woman's place; he looking up to her—the man's duty. Woe to the sweet alliance of the sexes in love in which the woman does not bend above, the man does not aspire to the woman's height!

She was tall enough, had they been side by side, to have met him with a level glance, or almost. There was that difference physically between them that there should be spiritually, only physically he—as it should be—was the larger and stronger being, as spiritually she predominated. His strength was in abeyance just then. Her beauty and her charm had mastered him. She fancied him like clay within her hands, shapely and beautiful and strong for moulding. Could she mould him? That was to be seen. Now, that afternoon, it was to be tried.

Before those two loomed a parting of the ways. Should she take his hand and follow along the right-hand path? Or should she go to the eastward and summon him to her? Was the leash that held the

heart of her lover in check strong enough to drag the man whither he fain would not go?

A horse fastened to the hitching post outside the gate at the end of the long lane stamped his feet impatiently; his tail slapped his sides, irritated by the summer flies. That horse had borne him there at a gallop. If he had been human he might have eased his fretting by considering whether he was to spend the night in the cool shade of the great red barn back of the house, or whether he was to carry back the impatient rider who had found his best pace too slow in the coming. The woman had suggested that the horse be stabled, but the man had declared that the exigencies of the time demanded that he should first have a decision which, at some peril to his liberty and in some sense to his honour, he had come to receive.

The young man had been at the old farmhouse many a time during the last two years. She had placed herself before him many a time as she was placed that afternoon, seated on the low rail of the porch, her alluring foot—as handsome and shapely a foot, if a little larger, and as well clad, as that of any Southern girl with whom he had ever tripped through the dance—swinging dazzlingly like a pendulum before him. Her back was bordered by clinging masses of purple clematis twining around white pillars, against which her bright hair shone golden in the sun. Had she caught that violet touch of colour in her eyes from the flowers? he wondered, on that day he had first declared his love, and, reaching up from where he had stood on the step slightly beneath her, had kissed her hand and then had slipped his arm about her waist and held her tightly lest she should fall from the porch. That was a year ago this present summer. He had imagined that the course of his life

was thenceforth and forever settled, that it was to be spent with this beloved woman. But now he had come to see indeed whether the dream of the year was to vanish in a stern awakening to the sound of cannon.

For these two were from different sections of a country which was hopelessly divided upon a question of principle. The question was an abstract one, and it might—so cold philosophy would have put it—have been discussed without heat, without animosity; but philosophy makes no accounting of human passions, and the debate about the interpretation of an ancient document revered as the Constitution had engendered bitter antagonisms which had bred hot unreasoning hatreds. The contention was exceeding sharp and bitter. Love shot his bolts against bucklers of misunderstanding which his blunt points, made for penetrable human hearts, could not pierce. Partaking of the national hatred, a coldness, better, a constraint, had sprung up between the lovers—a constraint that one other, who had only suspected how things had been, viewed with equanimity, nay, satisfaction.

The young man from the South was a student, or had been four days before, at Harvard College. His dearest friend and classmate was a brother of this girl. Scarcely second in his affections was the third person who had been glad at the signs of the impending rupture between his friend and his other friend's sister. Philip Grafton cherished Burt Kirkwood and George Manning in his heart of hearts after Kathleen Kirkwood, Burt's younger and only sister. The three friends, one from Massachusetts, one from Pennsylvania and one from Virginia, had developed in their six years at the great old University one of those friendships which not sixty years of severance would diminish. They had been more than brothers to

one another, yet singularly enough Grafton had not confided either to his prospective brother-in-law or to Manning the engagement which had been entered upon by him and Kathleen, though Kirkwood found it out certainly and Manning at last suspected it.

Perhaps Grafton divined Manning's passion for the girl he loved, and, knowing it to be hopeless, pitied him. It is only the love that is returned that awakens jealousy. With the forlorn hope that in time Manning might get over it, or recognise the futility of further pursuit, Grafton had consented to Kathleen's wish that there should be no announcement of an engagement between them. Why Kathleen wished it this way—well, that was a whim of hers, perhaps. At any rate Grafton made no attempt to discover a reason, content in the sharing of the sweet, delightful secret, confident that the time would soon come to declare it to the world. The fact that it was not known, although it had not entered into Kathleen's calculations at the time, was advantageous in the present situation; for, should she be unable to answer Grafton as he desired, should Grafton fail in the test of his affection which she proposed to lay upon him, they could separate and no one would ever know.

The friendship between the three men had been so great that the impending Civil War, which broke up so many affections, had not been allowed by any of them to interfere. Indeed Grafton's course had been something of an enigma. Promptly upon the secession of their several states the young Southern men at Harvard, especially those in the graduating classes, who had reached man's estate, had severed their connection with the University. Alone, among the Southerners, Grafton had remained to be graduated with his class. The student life was like art in those days, very long, and the three men did not receive their

diplomas until July 17, 1861. Philip, in addition to his four-year course in Arts and Letters, had given two years to the Law. Kirkwood and Manning also.

Kathleen had visited Cambridge for the Class Day exercises and then had returned to New York for a week's shopping, then back to old York in Pennsylvania, her home. There had been a tentative debate on certain propositions impending between her lover and herself, and he had promised to stop over at York for the conclusion of the whole matter before he went South—a promise that involved much, for Grafton's course in staying at the University had been severely commented upon both in Cambridge by the departing Southerners, and in Virginia, where his family and wealth made him a person of some little importance. It had excited notice even among the Northern men, who were as fiercely patriotic and as fully determined to put down the growing rebellion as the men of Virginia and the South were resolute to break away and set up a government of their own.

It was only the staunch and tried friendship of Kirkwood and Manning, who stood by their friend, that prevented the antagonism his known secession views aroused from breaking out into open demonstrations of animosity. Grafton, who had previously been popular with every one, found himself suddenly ostracised, yet he went about the closing duties of his last term with a quiet intensity of purpose, with a calm, cool courage, that awakened the admiration of the fair-minded men of his class—who were not few. He made no parade of his sentiments on the one hand, neither did he refrain from expressing his opinions, when it was proper, on the other. His course and his friends' advocacy won respect, and when his diploma was handed him, the last representative of

Virginia and the South in "Fair Harvard," as much of a stranger in Massachusetts as if he had been from a foreign land, he was actually cheered. For the moment a better feeling was exhibited, and his classmates closed about him, congratulating him and bidding him good-bye. For many of those who went into the army on either side it was an eternal farewell.

Manning had already been commissioned in a Massachusetts regiment and only awaited his graduation to march away. Kirkwood was also appointed to a subaltern's station in the Pennsylvania line. To his friends Philip had announced his intention of enlisting in the Virginia troops so soon as he received his diploma. The parting between the three friends was a sad one. When they met again it might be in the forefront of battle. They swore friendship everlasting to one another, and each promised himself to help the other should the fortunes of war ever afford an opportunity, and then they bade one another good-bye. Manning was forced to stay with his company; Kirkwood had been ordered to join his regiment in Philadelphia; therefore Grafton came down alone to the little Pennsylvania town nestling among the hills.

He should have hastened across the line to Virginia without a moment's delay, but he could not go without resolving that unsettled question with Kathleen Kirkwood. He feared that the war would be a long one and a bloody one. He surmised that most of it would be fought to the south of Mason and Dixon's line. When he could see the woman of his choice once he left her he could not imagine. The separation would be a long one. He could not go without a settlement. For that settlement he had come to her.

The girl had refused to believe in the urgency and

the strength of the call upon him which would hale him from her side.

"I cannot understand," she said, "how you can feel in this way now."

"Why not now?"

"Because you stayed so long at college. Let me see, Virginia went out of the Union on the 17th of April, three months to the very day before you graduated. All the Southerners at Harvard left, but you stayed on. I thought . . ." she said, looking away from him, but artfully turning her head so that he could see the delicious curve of her chin and note the lovely colour of youth and health upon her cheek, "I thought you stayed for . . . for me . . . for my sake."

Philip was nothing, if not honest.

"Kathleen, dearest Kathleen," he said, leaning forward until he could put his arm around her waist, "I did not know that you were in the balance. I thought I had your heart secure, as you have mine."

She flashed a look down upon him and then lifted her head quickly again.

"I stayed for that diploma," he continued. "My father, my grandfather, my great-grandfather, all graduated from Harvard. I had worked six years, counting my Arts and Letters course, for that bit of parchment. My heart . . . what of it you did not own, dearest . . . was with the South, but I knew there would be plenty of opportunities to prove my devotion there later on."

Kathleen shook herself with a movement of irritation.

"Wait, hear me!" continued the man. "And so I stayed until I graduated, for the degree."

"You must prize that bit of parchment highly!" snapped the offended young woman.

"I do. Saving two things it is more to me than anything . . ."

He hesitated.

"And those are?" cried the girl.

"The first is, You, dearest."

"Phil!"

She laid her hand upon his head. He turned his face up, and as her hand dropped slowly down across his brow he kissed the palm.

"Then you still . . ."

"You didn't give me time to finish, darling."

"Oh, I remember. There was a second thing."

"Yes." He was reluctant to say what it was, but honour and duty constrained him.

"And that was?" she questioned.

"Virginia!"

No, Virginia was not a woman, as well she knew. There was no other woman. It was the state. Not merely an extent of territory, but a state of being also, for in that single word was comprised to him all the manly qualities that blended into what we call by the name of honour; to her it stood for the loss of her lover, for many things she hated.

"First the diploma, and then Virginia and then me!" cried the girl, impatiently shaking off his hand and rising to her feet. She was hurt, wounded, disappointed, angry, and showed it plainly. "Well, sir, you have earned the diploma. But you must choose between . . ."

"Kathleen, don't say . . ."

"Between me and your state, sir!"

"Are you jealous of a state, of a point of honour?"

"I am jealous of nothing, of no one," she resented quickly, "but I brook no divided allegiance. No, do not misunderstand me," she went on swiftly, not giving him a chance to speak; "I am a Pennsyl-

vanian, but above all I am for the United States! My fathers fought to establish it, as did yours. I cannot bear to think that the man I love is going to fight to hold a portion of the human race in bondage."

"It's not that," interrupted Philip hotly. "It's States Rights versus . . ."

"I do not care how you phrase it," persisted the girl obstinately; "that's the way I feel about it. I cannot, will not, love a man who is not true to the flag! There is no question with me between state and nation. And I'll marry no man who will not love me above everything!"

"And if I were for the North would you have me love you above the flag you have floating from the staff yonder?"

In those days of doubt and trouble many a yard had its own private flagstaff.

"That's different," she returned audaciously; "we would love it together anyway, you and I, and I should not care. I should glory in you then."

This was shockingly inconsistent, and under other circumstances he would have promptly called her attention to it, but neither stood upon the trivialities of debate then. They had got down to the root of things and were in no mood for argumentative trifles.

"And I say," retorted Grafton quickly, "that the very fact that I give my allegiance to Virginia makes me the more worthy, so far as any man could be worthy of such a treasure"—he spoke in all sincerity, there was no suggestion of mockery—"of your love."

"I do not see it that way," answered the girl. "You have lived in the North for years. I have often heard you say you believed in manumitting your slaves."

“I tell you that has nothing to do with it. We would have maintained the doctrine of State Rights with any other cause for its assertion.”

“It has everything to do with it with me, for, as you very well know, if you Southerners would free your slaves there would be no war.”

“We cannot, upon compulsion,” said the young man, lifting his head with a pride that matched her own, “and if you are to make my political principles the cause of separation I cannot help it.”

“Oh, you feel that way, do you?” cried the girl, who was amazingly quick of temper. “The engagement is broken then!”

She tore from her finger a ring and extended it to him.

“Kathleen, don’t!” he protested, going suddenly white. “What difference does it make?”

“It makes all the difference in the world,” answered the young woman. “I can’t give my love to the enemy of my country, to a man who thinks so little of me that he is willing to fight against my people. Against that flag yonder!”

“But you said you loved me!”

“I take it back, then!”

“And is yours a love that can come and go at will?”

“It shall. Listen to me, Philip. You know that George Manning is devoted to me. I swear to you, unless you give me your word that you will not turn traitor . . .”

“Kathleen,” the man interrupted sternly, “there are some things that even you cannot say to me.”

“What are they, pray?”

“You shall not apply that word ‘traitor’ to me! I will not endure it!”

“You are domineering, like the South!” said the

girl bitterly—but she did not repeat the charge—then. “You Southerners have always governed the United States,” she continued, “but you will find now that . . .”

“That is because we have possessed the ability, the birth and breeding.”

“You will find out,” said Kathleen, fiercely resentful, “that the people of the North will decide what is to be done hereafter. You and all the rest are . . .”

What word trembled on her lips?

“Stop!” cried the man imperiously.

“Will you take that ring of yours and leave me!” urged the woman.

Poor Philip! He was angry, hurt, surprised, yet he was so overwhelmingly in love with the beautiful wayward being before him that as he looked upon her he forgot all other things. He mounted the steps to the porch on which she stood and stretched out his arms to her.

“Why should we quarrel, darling? It is most foolish. What have our political differences to do with our personal affections? I love you . . . I have to go where honour calls me . . . I shall go . . . but, saving my state, my heart is yours.”

“I . . . I do not understand such love. I do not care for it! I won't marry you . . .”

“Is this the quality of your affection?”

“It is!”

“No Southern woman would act so.”

“Go back to one and find out!”

“Do you mean that?”

“I do! Will you take your ring?”

Grafton seized it and in a passion threw it from him. Kathleen resisted a wild inclination to run after it and stood facing him, her face flushing, her foot

tapping the floor. He had received his dismissal, yet he could not go.

"Kathleen," he began again very softly.

"I don't think there is anything more to be said between us," she interrupted.

"But, my darling—" he held out his hand to her, and in spite of herself her heart yearned toward him, he was so handsome, so splendid. Why couldn't he have been on her side? Why couldn't she bring him to her way of thinking? Wilful, wayward, imperious, she would not give up. She saw the love burn in his cheek, flash in his eye, tremble on his lip. He could not go away! She stepped nearer to him.

"Phil," she said, "you needn't fight against the South if you stay here. But don't fight for it against the United States—and me. Just stay here with me to show me and the world how much you love me. I will marry you to-morrow. I can't let you go, dear."

It was her time to plead now, she thought. She came close to him. He could see the rise and fall of her beautiful bosom as her arm stole around his neck. Lips that he had often pressed approached his own. Her eyes scanned his face as if to read his heart. He closed his own eyes, his heart stopped beating. How could he go, with her in his arms when he loved her so! Then the interruption came that saved his honour and his happiness, although he thought his life was wrecked thereby. A man, one of the servants of the farm, dashed into the yard on a reeking horse. He was shouting something. The two parted instantly as he approached.

"What's the matter?" asked Kathleen, angry at the untimely interruption.

"We've been defeated," gasped out the excited man. "Beauregard has licked McDowell! Our

men run like sheep, the Rebels are goin' to take Washington! The Union Army has been cut to pieces! They begun fightin' at noon, there's twenty thousand of our'n killed! There was two hundred thousand of 'em ag'in' us."

"What's that you say?" cried the woman, her face pale at the news.

"It's true, Miss Kirkwood. The town's full of it! They're postin' bulletins at the telegraph office. Here's a message for you. It's from Washington, from your brother, the operator sez."

Kathleen tore it open with trembling fingers.

"It's from Burt!" she cried. "His regiment has reached Washington. He says there has been a dreadful battle and we have been defeated."

"Great heaven!" exclaimed Grafton. "Already?"

"There's a message for you," said the girl, reading: "'Tell G—— if he doesn't wish to be detained he must go home immediately. It's rumoured that all passes have been revoked.'"

She looked up as she spoke. In spite of himself there was a look of exultation in Grafton's face. The first blow had been struck, the Yankees had been defeated! They had run like cowards, the man had said so. Well, the victory was to be expected. No wonder that the ghost of a smile flickered about Grafton's mouth, that a glint of triumph could be seen in his eye. It was the last straw to the woman. Nervously she clutched the telegram in her hand. No, she would not speak while there were observers.

"Take the horse around to the stable," she ordered the man, "and when you have had supper go down town and bring me more news."

The man turned eagerly to tell the news elsewhere and disappeared. Then she turned and faced Grafton.

"You laughed," she said with pardonable exaggeration; "you gloated over this defeat, over me! Shame!"

"Kathleen," began Grafton, heartily ashamed of himself to think that he had allowed his expressive face to declare his feelings to his sweetheart's hurt.

"Do not speak to me! I never wish to hear your voice, to see your face again! I never shall!"

"But you love . . ."

"Do not mention that word to me! I hate you. . . I despise you! You have had your message," she continued pale with anger and scorn, flinging the telegram at him. "Go!"

"Is this your final word?"

"My final word!"

"You can say that after what we have been to each other? A moment ago you were in my arms, your lips ready . . ."

"You insult me in the remembrance!" she cried. "I despise you! I hate you! I tear you out of my heart as you have torn yours out of your country!"

She was wild with passion. Her lips curled in contempt, and still she was beautiful, and still Grafton loved her! He opened his mouth to speak again; she raised her hand and pointed to the gate.

"It is over, then," said the man; "your love is a thing that comes and goes with the seasons. You hate me, you say. I wish to God I could reciprocate that feeling!"

He turned without another word, and ran down the path. He could not trust himself to walk. He threw himself upon the horse and galloped away, rage, indignation, and overwhelming affection fighting a battle in his soul. Left on the porch the girl watched him go. She stretched out her arms to him, she took a step down to the walk. Then she stopped.

No, he had made his choice! His love had proved unequal to the test. She hated him, she despised him! She turned and went into the library. There on her desk lay a letter received that morning, a letter from a gallant young soldier who wore the blue. She seized a sheet of paper, wrote half a dozen lines, enveloped it, addressed it, sealed it, stamped it, went out into the hall, thrust it into the hands of one of the servants, ordering it to be posted at once, and then, returning to the deserted library, sank down before the desk again, buried her face in her hands and burst into a flood of tears.

CHAPTER II

GOD SAVE THE UNITED STATES

THEY made a pretty picture, those two.

The white-haired old man sat in a large easy chair which had been especially designed for his comfort. For many years he had been without the use of his lower limbs and a light coverlet of silk was spread over them. His handsome and intellectual old face was clean-shaven, his long hair, white as the infrequent snows of his native land, fell in waves that were almost curls upon his still broad shoulders. Age had dimmed the sight of his eyes, but they could still flash with the soft wavering light of crowning years, like a far-off vanishing storm upon a summer night. His thin aristocratic hands lay listless upon his motionless knees. There was a troubled look on his face which ill-accorded with the beautiful, peaceful scene spread before his fading vision.

By his side stood a mere slip of a girl, pale of face, dark of hair, slight of figure—an undeveloped child who had just passed her sixteenth birthday. The lines of her face and form were full of promise, but the realisation would be long deferred. This was singular, for in the sunshine of that Southland the flowers blossomed early, and most things that were beautiful—including the young women—matured early. Girls frequently were married at sixteen, at seventeen they were mothers, and in those terrible days of war some of them became widows while they were yet scarcely more than children.

It was not so with Ariadne Lewis. Perhaps some

quality of her French great-grandmother, Anne de Rohan, which she had received along with her somewhat whimsical name from that famous Breton woman, had retarded her development, so that when others of her sex were women she was as yet only a child. Child or not, she was nevertheless the main dependence and the sole comfort of her grandfather, the Judge. So far as nature permitted she supplied the place of his wasted limbs; and if she were slender and thin, it may be that her assiduity in promoting the old man's comfort, her constant and unstinted care for him, had contributed to that result.

Mentally the girl was far in advance of her day and generation. Continuous contact with a mind so richly furnished as that of her grandfather had brought her in touch with stores of unwonted learning. The astute observations of the wise old man of the world had sharpened her native wit until, though a child in body, she had become a woman in knowledge—a woman in knowledge of all those things her grandfather could teach her, but lacking all sorts of information peculiar to her sex which is instinctive in womankind and which was latent in her, could she have had a mother, or even a friend, to call it forth.

Judge Lewis and his granddaughter lived alone on the old plantation. A proud man had been the old Judge and a great part had he played in the history of his native state and his country. A wild spirit of adventure moving him, in the War of 1812 he had attached himself to the fortunes of that brave backwoods *preux chevalier*, Andrew Jackson, and with the bold Tennesseans and Kentuckians and the dapper Creoles he had stood behind the mud walls below New Orleans and watched the British power wither before the rifle blasts of the men of the forest glades.

Resigning from the army in the piping times of

peace, he had followed the law and had been called to the bench. Thereafter he had been sent to Congress and then he had been elected and re-elected again and again a Senator of the United States from Virginia. He had ever remained, in Washington and out of it, the friend of the great Tennessean soldier, who, like the Judge himself, was one of the finest gentlemen of his time. When in 1832 South Carolina passed her famous Ordinance of Nullification, Judge Lewis had been one of the chief upholders of Jackson's determined and brilliant policy.

He could have been re-elected to the Senate until he died had not a paralytic stroke cut him down some ten years since. Thereafter, in a pride which was natural if somewhat foolish, he had withdrawn from all participation in the affairs of men and had buried himself with his little granddaughter at Vallewis, his ancestral plantation on the James River, a few miles below Richmond. For a time his contemporaries had sought him for comfort or counsel, but presently a new generation which knew not Joseph arose, and in his retirement he was left as he desired, unvexed by the intrusion of strangers or unharassed by the visit of friend.

Had Richard Lewis, his only son, lived, it would all have been different of course. His boy's body lay beneath the frowning cliffs of Chapultepec. "Bury him on the field which he honoured with his life's blood," had been the Judge's reply to those who suggested bringing him home, and there his comrades of Scott's army had left him—the corpse of an enemy in a foreign land, alone, forgotten by all but the Judge himself and some few of his comrades who sometimes gave backward thoughts to the wars of the past in the threatening conditions which were rapidly developing then.

There was another grave near the little chapel on the slope of the hill facing the river. Ariadne's mother lay there. Two thousand leagues of hill and valley, of plain and mountain, parted all that was left of her from all that was left of the man she had loved, whose daughter she had given birth to ere she died of heartbreak at the news from the far-off field of battle. But in the sight of Him to whom a thousand years are but as a watch in the night, as yesterday when it is past, there is no distance, and before God the souls of Captain Richard Lewis and Ariadne his wife met and clasped hands in joy unspeakable.

The little girl often went alone to the low grave marked with its plain white stone—an unostentatious race, these Lewises—and sat down on the green turf and stared out across the sparkling waters of the placid river. She dreamed of the young soldier in that tropic land, of her mother lying at her feet, of the two who were parted for a little space and united for eternity. But flowers blossomed, as they e'en will do, about the grave before her and over the grave 'neath the shadow of the great Aztec rock, and the reveries of the child were sweet, not sad. Sweet it is to think that the dust that returns to the earth some day becomes the frond of the flower—from death, life, and that life everlasting.

Her father's and her mother's portraits hung side by side in the drawing-room. Ariadne often stood at gaze before them and wondered if she would ever be as beautiful as the face of the young woman—scarcely more than a girl indeed—that smiled down at her from the dusky background of the fading canvas. She dreamed, too, of a lover, who should be a brave and gallant soldier like her father; a lover who was to fight the battles of his country, but who should not, like him, fall at the head of a charging column.

No; full of honours and quick with life he was to come back and claim her, and even—but the man she really loved with all the strength of her youthful heart was not a soldier at all! He was a lawyer, and some declared him to be a recreant, because he delayed the proffer of his services to his state. While thousands of her best people were already in arms he had lingered in the North, that North that Ariadne in a blind unreasoning, totally feminine, as well as entirely youthful way, was growing to hate with an inveteracy which should have bespoke a better cause for animosity. And Ariadne despised when she hated. Had not the craven Yankees run like sheep before the dashing attacks of Beauregard's brave young Southerners through all the long July afternoon but yesterday at Manassas—and her lover was not there with the young manhood of the state!

However, Ariadne did not question the young lawyer's patriotism on that account, not she. She trusted like youth, naturally; she dreamed like youth, absolutely; and she hoped like youth, without a doubt, without a reservation. She knew why he had delayed, or if she did not, he would explain it all, for he was coming back to-day! A servant had galloped up to the great house by the river road that morning with a note for the old Judge in which the writer said that he had at last reached Richmond, and that after he had attended to some necessary business in the city he would be with them ere the night fell.

The Judge's race was nearly run. Had the times been peaceful he might have lingered on long past three-score-and-ten years, but his heart had been rent and torn within him by the events of the past year, even as the Union for which he had fought had been rent and torn. In the last analysis Judge Lewis was for the state as against the United States. That is

not saying that he viewed the severance of relations between the grand old Dominion between the Chesapeake and the mountains and the greater Dominion that extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific with equanimity or satisfaction.

Virginia neither desired nor countenanced Secession. The hot-headed impulsiveness of South Carolina was not reflected by the great calm state which had given Washington to the land and was soon to give Lee as evidence of the quality of her manhood. But when armed foot was set upon her soil and she was required to choose between fighting against and fighting with the wayward sisters that lay beyond her borders to the South, her decision was certain. There was only one course she could pursue.

It was pain and grief to the old man, as it was to many another true-hearted patriot, when Virginia, which had been its mother, as it were, went out of the Union. Sadly, sadly, with eyes that did not flash, but that brimmed with tears, he saw the slender hands of Ariadne strike the flag of the United States from the staff from which from sunrise to sunset, by his orders, it had ever fluttered. Mistily he saw her while she hoisted in its place the new flag to which he was almost too old to give allegiance.

New things are for youth. Ariadne had not fought for that flag as he had, she had not poured out her life blood for that flag as her father did; she had not seen it grow star by star until it had become the most glorious constellation in the heraldry of the heavens. Old Aza, the Judge's body servant, who had been Ariadne's father's man also in Mexico, usually hoisted and lowered the flag, but on that day that it had come down for the last time Ariadne herself insisted upon striking it, and her own self hauled the flag which she with the assistance of Aunt Dessy, her black old

mammy, had made, to the top of the tall staff. It was the twitch of her vigorous young arm—she was a wiry little body, strong, if slight—which had shaken it out to the breeze before the audience of wondering and amused slaves, who clapped their hands and cheered delightedly, not discerning what either banner meant to them. Ignorance knows no standard and is indifferent to its flag.

Yet the triumphant Ariadne was sorry after it was all over when she saw the stricken look and noted the despairful gesture with which the old man covered his white face with his whiter hand. Had he been in power he could have done no other than as his friends and successors in the state had done, yet the doing of it broke his heart.

Ariadne had become suddenly fearful lest the expected guest would not arrive in time to see her grandfather again. When the letter came that morning the Judge had revived marvellously. He had insisted upon being dressed for the first time in months, after dinner, and they had brought him out upon the broad gallery surrounding the old Colonial house. There through the fading hours of the long afternoon his eye had wandered from field to copse, from copse to river. It was the home of his ancestors, the home of his boyhood, soon to be his no more. Many and broad were its acres, happy and joyous its slaves. Contentment and the peace of fruitful summer were there.

But generally, with an eagerness so great as to be painfully obvious even to the girl by his side, the Judge would turn from the fields and woodlands, in which he had played as a child, to search the winding river road. Anticipation gave him a certain fictitious strength, or the appearance of it; excitement lent to his pale cheek a touch of colour which wavered like the rosy glow that fitfully comes from a dying fire on

a midnight hearth, as he saw away down the road a far-off moving figure. It had been visible to the girl for some time. She was keen-eyed, but she had said nothing lest she raise false hopes. The Judge shaded his brows with his hand and looked.

"My child," he said in a voice of silvery sweetness, which, when it had been strong with virile power had charmed his friends and even awakened the admiration and, what was more important, commanded the silence, of his enemies, when he had spoken: "My child, is not that he, yon horseman?"

"Yes, Grandfather," answered the girl in the soft tones of the Southern woman.

Her voice had a contralto note in it, scarcely matured as yet, like her person, but surprising in its fullness and its sweetness—a reflex of the old "man's speech but tempered by her gentler sex. It always startled the Judge when he heard it suddenly after a little silence, it was so like that of his wife. He had married while still young Ariadne de Rohan Grafton. Her grandmother had been of a noble house in Brittany. She had been wooed and won in Colonial days by a young American sailor named Philip Grafton, who had brought her to Virginia and had founded a numerous race of brave men and beautiful women.

"And do you think," continued the old man after a little pause staring at the rapidly approaching figure, "that it is he?"

"It is Philip, I am sure of it."

With a deep sigh of satisfaction the Judge sank back in his chair and together the two watched the coming horseman. They saw him easily and clearly against the shimmering background of the river, bright with the sunset; therefore they could make him out before he could recognise them in the shadow of the porch; but as he drew nearer he discerned them,

for they saw him lift his hat and wave it in the air. Then they knew it was he. The sound of a faint cry, an old-fashioned view hallo, came softly to them in the still evening air. Old Aza heard it, too, as he came around the corner of the house at that moment.

"You Jeff!" he called to his son and general factotum, "heh cum Marse Phil. Come 'long out heh an' tek he horse."

Not only Jeff, but the whole body of negroes in or about the house responded to the call, and when the rider galloped up the broad driveway and drew rein before the long flight of steps that led to the high gallery he was at once surrounded by a laughing, tumultuous group of black men and women whose white teeth, flashing, indicated, as did their smiling faces and approving shouts, the warmth of their welcome. Grafton thrust them aside good-naturedly as he sprang from his horse with a pleasant word of recognition here and there which made the objects of his attention strut around with pride, and then he ran lightly up the steps.

Ariadne, the excitement having brought a delicate wild rose colour into her pale face, met him at the top. In her freshly laundered muslin frock very sweet and pretty she looked to the young man dusty from his rapid ride; poised above him with outstretched hands, whether for flight or welcome, like a little white sprite or fairy. Unthinkingly he seized her, lifted her slender person in the air, held it there a moment or two, and then kissed her full on the lips and gently set her down on her feet again. He marked with amused surprise the fierce flame of colour that suffused her cheeks, the mixture of indignation and pleasure in the look she threw upon him, and then he turned to the old man.

The Judge sat leaning far forward, his will almost

supplying him with ability to rise. He reached out his hands and took both of the young man's in his own.

"Thank God!" he said, and the satisfaction in his voice was as pathetic as the appeal in his fettered attitude. "You have come at last. I feared that you would be too late."

"As fast as steam and steed could bring me, sir," said Philip gently, "have I come, sir. As soon as I got my diploma I left Boston."

"Had you trouble getting through the lines?"

"Not much, sir. General Scott, for Cousin Dick's sake, gave me a pass."

"Philip," cried Ariadne suddenly, conscious of what to her was a striking fact, "you have a grey jacket on!"

"Yes," said the young man promptly, "I am a soldier."

"What!"

"Since this morning."

"Cavalry?"

Philip shook his head.

"Artillery?"

"Infantry," answered the young man calmly, "a high private in the rear rank, you know."

"What!" cried Ariadne, scandalised. "I thought you would be a general surely."

"We have too many generals now," said the young man gravely, "and what we need are more privates."

"But why did you go and be a foot-soldier, you, the best rider in Prince George County?"

"Yes, Philip," said the Judge, "since we must fight I should prefer you to have been a horseman. The musket is well enough, but the sword is ever the gentleman's weapon."

"I, too, should have preferred the cavalry, sir,"

returned Philip, "but General Lee, whose advice I took, urged me to join the infantry. He said that all the best young men of the state were crowding into the cavalry and artillery. The Richmond Howitzers begged me to come with them, but I saw it the way the general did. We need to leaven up the infantry."

"But only a private soldier!" cried Ariadne.

"But I know nothing about the art of war," protested Philip.

"The art of war?" exclaimed the girl. "I thought every Southern gentleman knew how to fight."

"To fight, yes. But drill and tactics and so on are quite another thing."

"Tactics? Why didn't you study them at Boston?"

"Yankee tactics?" asked the young man mischievously.

"Any kind of tactics are better than none, I suppose," replied Ariadne, and then—"Philip, why didn't you come here before? They are saying all sorts of things about you . . ."

"I know it," said the young man, grown suddenly grave, "but I felt it proper for me to remain at the college until I was graduated and had received my diploma. It was hard enough, sir," he continued, turning to the old man; "God knows I wanted to be the first to enlist for old Virginia. But I knew there would be plenty of time, and I could not waste the work of those six years. I wanted that sheepskin."

"And you were right," said the Judge emphatically.

"A Yankee diploma from an abolition college!" interrupted Ariadne scornfully.

“Learning is learning, North or South,” replied Philip. “Harvard did not affect my principles one way or the other.”

“Oh, if you had only studied war, too, and . . .”

“My dear little girl,” returned Philip, in a patronising, jesting manner which always infuriated Ariadne, “I was too busy studying law for anything else then . . . now it is different. I shall begin to prepare for a general’s commission at once.”

“There is no nobler profession than that of law, my child,” interposed the old Judge, just in time to check an angry response from the young girl. “In the end the scales of justice weigh the world, and the law is justice. Philip did well to make sure of his diploma. I should have grieved if he had not secured it, as we all did. Yet I am loath to see him serve in the army in so humble a capacity, where his fathers have led.”

“Sir, said the young man, with sudden gravity, “as General Lee says, it will be a long war. Those who learn in its hard school will have opportunity to show what they can do before it is ended.”

“A long war?” cried the girl; “why, we’ll sweep those Yankees into the sea in three months! Mr. Toombs says he is going to call the roll of his slaves from the foot of Bunker Hill. I read it myself the other day in the *Examiner*.”

“That is foolish talk, Ariadne,” said the Judge, with a reproving shake of the head, “and I told you so when you read it to me.”

“It is indeed, sir,” assented Grafton; “I have come from the North, and I know.”

“And what is the spirit there?” questioned the old man.

“As strong as it is here,” answered Philip promptly. “There is as much enthusiasm in Boston

as there is in Richmond. I never saw finer troops than some of the regiments that have been mustered into the Federal forces there. The Six Massachusetts is a stunning body of men; and so are the Pennsylvania troops. Burt Kirkwood is a lieutenant in one of those regiments."

"Burt Kirkwood?" said Ariadne, "your college chum?"

"Yes. We graduated together and bade each other good-bye immediately. George Manning . . . I have often written about him, you know"—Ariadne nodded—"he's in a Massachusetts regiment . . . they're all right, too. We three fellows were the best of friends at college . . . the inseparables, they called us."

"But one Southerner, you know," interrupted the girl, "can whip five Yankees."

There was no amusement in her manner. This extraordinary statement was not badinage, for Ariadne and most of the women and many of the men of the South fully believed that what she had said was quite true, only the odds were frequently longer.

"Not three like Burt or George," answered Philip quietly. He knew the absurdity of that claim, which nevertheless may have served some good purpose, since it created a confidence that is sometimes a precursor of success. "No, dear, we're going to have our hands full."

"But we will win, of course; we must win," said Ariadne.

"Oh, of course, we shall," answered Philip, with equal confidence.

"With a just cause and the favour of Heaven, we cannot fail," said the old man softly and sadly. "Yet I wish there was some other way. I dread

the appeal to arms. I wish we could be let alone. Do you think there is any possibility?"

"None whatever, sir. They say in the North that we shall not leave the Union."

"But we have left it," said the Judge.

"Then they will force us back into it."

"Never, never!" exclaimed Ariadne, full of indignant protest.

"Not while we have a man alive to be influenced by such spirit as yours, my dear child," said Philip, smiling.

"Phil Grafton, I wish you wouldn't call me a child!" vehemently cried Ariadne, her indignation finding another object upon which to spend itself besides the Yankees. "I'm sixteen years old and Mamie Dylett"—pointing to an adjoining plantation—"was married from that house day before yesterday to Mr. John Oakley. And, by the way, he's a lieutenant in the Ninth Infantry."

"My regiment," interrupted Grafton pleasantly.

"Well, I'll tell him to make you behave yourself," continued the girl, not in the least mollified by his good-humour. "And Mamie Dylett's only past seventeen."

"And are you contemplating matrimony, Miss Lewis?" rejoined the vastly amused Grafton. Indeed, the idea was so utterly incongruous with the immature little figure standing so dauntlessly erect before him that first he smiled, then he laughed.

"Of course not! But I'm old enough to be, sir, and I'd have you to know . . ."

"Skuse me, gent'mum an' Miss Adny," said old Aza at that moment, coming out on the gallery with a huge tray uplifted on his black hands in a most stately manner. The salver bore two tall glasses looking somewhat lonely on the vast expanse of silver.

In them ice twinkled alluringly and the light was reflected from green leaves from which a delicious fragrance of mint was diffused. There was a third glass of the paler hue of lemon, which was for Ariadne. It was a most fortunate entrance and interruption. "I reckoned dat Marse Phil'd be thirsty fum he long ride down de ribbah road, an' I knowed 't was 'bout time fer yer ebenin' s'lute, suh," continued the old darkey, proffering the glasses.

The sun had just dipped beyond the house to the west. Thomas Jefferson was already fumbling at the halliards at the foot of the flagstaff. The Judge lifted his glass, Ariadne took her glass of lemonade, Philip the other julep, and the two young people stood very straight as the flag came slowly down. Jeff, with that instinctive appreciation of the beautiful and picturesque common to his race, lowered it so slowly that he seemed to give a touch of grace, of romance almost, to the fall of the flag, as it floated, wavered and at last settled softly, like a great bird, in the dying wind on the grass below them.

"Let me give a toast," said Ariadne impulsively, as they watched its gentle descent.

"My child," said the Judge, bowing acquiescently toward the little figure.

"Happiness and prosperity to Virginia and the Southern Confederacy!" said Ariadne.

"I drink deep to that," Philip promptly joined in.

"Virginia," said the old man, his glance sweeping the prospect before them, "home of my boyhood, land of my fathers, rest of my old age, much prosperity to thee . . . happiness . . . yes . . ." He hesitated. Two tears trickled softly down his cheeks. "God save the United States!" he muttered as his head fell forward on his breast.

CHAPTER III

FOR ARIADNE'S SAKE

THE young men and young women of Virginia were eager for war with the United States. Older men like Judge Lewis and others, who had seen war, thought differently. There were also a few young men like Grafton, who were familiar with the state of feeling in the North, who realised that the struggle was not to be that holiday excursion, that mere military promenade by the Southern armies, which those less well-informed fancied would take place. Consequently the younger man shared the old man's sadness as they together watched the falling flag. Blood was to be poured out like water, money was to be spent without stint, all that heroic courage, entire consecration, absolute devotion, coupled with talent and ability of the highest order, could do, would be done to keep up that flag. Men and women, grandsires and matrons, youths and maidens, were to live to serve it and love to die for it—in vain. In the end it was to fall softly upon the grass of the war-blasted land—its pall—and remain only a deathless memory in Southern hearts.

There was no premonition of that then. Believing fondly as they did in the justice of their cause and convinced that right must and would prevail, they had no doubt that as surely as men in the end must observe the law, so in the end the might of God, acting through the power of man, would enable them to achieve their desires.

With the setting of the sun a breeze sprang sharply

from the river. There was a little chill touch in its breath across the steel-grey waters. They must take the old man in. As he looked upon him, Grafton realised how tenuous was his hold on life. In the twilight, with the glow of the sun off his face and the surprise and excitement of Philip's arrival gone, he looked very old, wasted and broken. A great tenderness filled the heart of the young man, not only for the old friend of his boyhood, but for Ariadne. Hers was a beauty that required light at that stage of its development. In the half-shadow she seemed thinner, frailer, softer, than before—as if, wraith-like, she would vanish away.

They were alone on the porch, in the twilight, in the world, those three. The ancient family of Lewis was reduced to Ariadne, and the equally old race of Grafton to Philip. One of those slender blood connections of which the South makes much existed between the two families. Philip's great-grandfather had been an uncle to the Judge's wife. He and Ariadne, therefore, were cousins very far removed. Grafton had a small plantation, Braeside, adjoining Vallewis, opposite South Acres, the Dylett place, whence Philip's boyhood friend, Oakley, had just taken a bride. Grafton had never lived on the place, however. Ever since his father died, bequeathing him to the Judge, he had been an inmate of Vallewis. He was a small boy of seven when Ariadne was born, and he knew the whole history of her life, therefore; a simple, innocent, uneventful story it was, holding absolutely no promise of its dramatic future.

Philip was very fond of Ariadne. For a long time she had held undisputed the first place in his heart, but within the last two years, at least since he had met Kathleen Kirkwood, Ariadne had taken second place. Philip, indeed, loved her, but his affection was

that of a brother for a younger sister. On her part Ariadne had always loved Philip. He represented to her the beau ideal of everything in humanity, in masculine humanity, that is. It was but a childish heart that beat beneath that immature breast, but in it were latent and nascent the fires of a woman's passion. She dreamed of him. She stared long at his picture. She treasured his letters. It was all childlike and innocent now, but unless it were checked some day it would overwhelm her. The current of her being was like a wavering tide, but when it should settle it would go with the force of a flooding sea toward him, and, unlike the tide, there would be no ebb to that mighty flow.

Philip was entirely unconscious of this feeling on the part of Ariadne. His heart had been heavy within him all the way from Pennsylvania. He saw Kathleen Kirkwood still on his soul's horizon. In the separation which, like distance to the view, sometimes lends enchantment to the recollection, her beauty was enhanced, her charm intensified, while with each receding mile the sting of her bitter words lost force. She could not mean what she had said; that last cruel decision should not stand as the final one between them. Yet his hope was but a faint one. He had enlisted in Richmond that morning in a mood full of desperation. He would have enlisted in any event, of course, but not in that way. He had felt that he had nothing left to love but Virginia; as if now that Kathleen had sent him off the sooner he laid down his life for his land the better; but as he stood on the gallery beside the feeble old man there came across him suddenly, with the force of a blow, that the Judge's time was over and that he must live for Ariadne.

They carried the Judge into the house and laid

him upon his couch in the library. He did not wish to be taken to his chamber. He would die among his books with his wife's face above him and the world in view through the open window by his side. He had grow suddenly weaker. Grafton, who had not seen him in one of these attacks of faintness, was greatly alarmed, and even Ariadne, to whom use had made them not so appalling, was filled with dismay. The Judge did not respond to the remedies they administered, and Jeff was sent galloping in hot haste for a physician. The old man realised what the others only suspected, that his end was at hand. When he recovered a little strength from the stimulants which they gave him, he begged Ariadne to leave him alone with Philip for a little space.

"My boy," said the dying man feebly, as the younger man knelt down at the side of the couch and took the hand of his faithful old friend and mentor in his own, "I have lived my time. I am quite ready to go, yet I prayed that I might be allowed to live until you came home for"—his voice faltered—"for Ariadne's sake."

"Do not say that, sir!"

"It is true. I do not wear a soldier's jacket, like you, Philip, but I can face death as a soldier should, and I do not wish to live longer. Virginia could do no less, but I was too long under the old flag to be happy under the new."

"Do not speak of that now, sir," said Grafton, scarce knowing what to reply.

"Perhaps it will come out right in the end, but I shall not live to see it. Indeed, there is little time left me and less strength. I must tell you quickly. You will take care of the child when I am gone?"

"With all my heart, sir! I shall be like . . ."

"Philip, you are not engaged to any of those Northern girls, are you?"

"No, sir."

"Your letters of late have been full of a young lady's name, Miss . . . ah . . . Kirkwood . . . is she . . . are you . . ."

"There is nothing whatever between Miss Kirkwood and myself," answered Grafton, although the admission wrung his heart.

"Good! Then I can say what I please. Philip, Ariadne has nothing. The place is very much run down; the last overseer I had was a Yankee. He robbed me right and left. I raised what money I could on the plantation; Hill & Jamison were my brokers in Richmond. They invested it in Northern securities. Hill & Jamison failed the other day, and this threatened war has ruined me. I find I can realise nothing in the North. Vallewis is gone; I shall not live to see it . . ."

"Good heavens, sir!" cried Philip, "is there nothing left?"

"Nothing. Even the slaves, except Asa and Aunt Dessy . . ."

"What will become of Ariadne?"

"Philip," said the old man impressively, with a sudden accession of strength, "you must marry her."

"What, sir!" exclaimed the young man, involuntarily starting back.

"Marry her."

"Why, she is only a child!"

"I know that. Give her the protection of your name. Wait to claim her until . . . well . . . until the war is over."

"But I will provide for her without that. What I have shall be hers. She shall share everything that is mine."

"No," said the old Judge. "That will not do. I know that child. She will be beholden to no one. She will go out and try to earn her own living rather than accept your charity."

"But it will not be charity. I shall be delighted to do"

"Nothing can sweeten the bitter bread of dependence, Philip. Ariadne is only a child in appearance, but she has a well-stored mind. There isn't a more honourable soul dwelling in a human body than hers. Her independence is boundless. It does not appear what she will be in person to inexperienced eyes, perhaps, but her grandmother was a beautiful woman, the most beautiful I ever saw," said the old man, his mind reverting in his dying moment to the wife of his youth. "See her picture there on the wall. Ariadne is very like her . . . very like . . . I shut out the past and see her when the child appears. I listen and I hear her voice when Ariadne speaks. Marry her, my boy. She loves you. She is like my Ariadne, and I, who know, tell you there are capacities in the hearts of the women of that race that promise joy unspeakable. I cannot go and leave her to fight her battle alone. You will be in the field; you may be killed. Give her the protection of your name. She is so young, so innocent, and she loves you, Phil. It will be her happiness and yours."

"Why not," thought Philip as he listened to the Judge's plea. "I can repay the devotion this old man has spent on me. Does the child really love me? I can make her happy then. She need never know; it's all off between us. Kathleen Kirkwood will never change. And if she would, I cannot stoop where I have been so thrust aside. Virginia . . . I was willing and anxious to lay down my life for Virginia. She has first claim upon me. But Ariadne, she too

has a claim. What I have will be hers. I can give her my name. I am sure she will bear it worthily."

"You will, Philip? You cannot refuse me that. . . ."

"Say no more, sir," said Grafton. "If Ariadne will do me the honour she shall be my wife."

"May it be now, Philip, before I die?"

"Whenever you please, sir, if she will," answered Grafton promptly. Having made up his mind there was no occasion for delay.

Just then Dr. Ellison rode up to the door. Ariadne, fiercely jealous because of her exclusion from her grandfather's room, brought the doctor in. He was an old friend of the Judge, as his father had been. With a sympathetic glance the doctor stepped to the old man's side and began his examination. He asked a few questions of grave import and produced a medicine-case which he had brought with him, and began compounding a certain prescription.

"Ellison," began the Judge faintly, "I am not afraid to die."

"I know you are not," answered the doctor.

"And I ask you as a man and a gentleman, tell me, is not this the end?"

"Only God can determine that, Judge; but so far as my poor skill allows me to say"—he lingered over the words as if he would fain delay their utterance—"I think you will scarcely recover from this attack."

Ariadne clenched her hands and bit her lip. Her heart almost stopped its beating, but she made no sound. Philip stepped closer to her and put his arm around her waist. She was grateful for the support, which, however, she scarcely needed and little availed herself of, she stood so erect. She had known that in the nature of things her grandfather's death

could not be far off, and she had tried to prepare herself. But when the moment arrived it came to her with all the shock of the utterly unexpected. Death is a thing for which the loving are never ready. It is always a surprise to the bereft.

"Will it be long?" asked the Judge.

"Indeed, I scarcely think you can survive the night."

"Ellison," said the old man, with a sudden access of vigour, "I must live until morning! You must keep me here until then!"

"You are in the hands of the Lord, Judge. I will do my best."

"Is there no remedy, unusual but powerful, which you can employ?"

The doctor nodded.

"I have just received a certain drug from France," he said; "I have not fully determined its qualities, but they say . . ."

"Give it me," cried the Judge; "I can't die tonight!"

There was something appalling in that sudden and resolute clinging to life by the old man.

"Why does he say that?" whispered Ariadne to Philip.

Death sometimes temporarily sharpens the failing senses. Her grandfather had heard her faint whisper and he himself made answer.

"I must live to see you and Philip married in the morning. Will some one send for Bishop Meade?"

"He is an old man, sir," said Grafton quickly. "Will not the Rector . . ."

"The Bishop," interrupted the Judge firmly. "He married me, he married my son. He will rise from his dying bed to marry my granddaughter."

"If you expect to live until morning, Judge," said

the physician, approaching with a glass containing the medicine, "you must drink this, and then you must be quiet. Excitement would only hasten the end."

"Is that the French drug?"

"It is."

"Will it make me sleep?"

"I think so."

"Shall I ever awaken?"

"I hope so."

"You will watch by me and not let me die . . . alone?"

"I will not leave you throughout the night."

"And I, too," said Ariadne.

"No, my dear," said the doctor, turning to her; "I, alone. Philip, take her away." He had known them both from childhood. Indeed, he had brought Ariadne into the world.

"You will call me . . . if . . ." whispered the girl, unwilling to leave.

"Yes," said the physician; "you may trust me."

Ariadne stepped softly to the side of her grandfather's couch and bent her head and kissed him.

"Philip has made me very happy," whispered the old man tenderly; "may he make you happy, too."

"I will, so help me God!" cried Philip.

"Good-night, children," said the Judge; "I shall see you in the morning. Now, doctor, the medicine."

CHAPTER IV

THE DAY BREAKS

OUT through the hall, past the silent line of awe-struck negroes, Grafton led the poor little lonely girl. Anxious to escape from even their friendly eyes, she turned to the nearest door, which happened to be that of the drawing-room. He half-carried, half-led her into the long room.

"Phil," she said as he closed the door, "tell me the truth. Is Grandfather going to die?"

"I am afraid so, little sweetheart."

He watched her narrowly as he spoke, fearful lest she should break down. Her eyes were preternaturally bright and her face paler than ever, but there was no unsteadiness in the glance with which she looked at him.

"What did he mean . . . about" Here she hesitated.

"About our marriage, Ariadne?" asked Grafton slowly.

"Yes," she nodded.

"It is . . . I wish you to be my wife. Will you?" he asked her.

"But I . . . I am so young"

"Your grandfather has given his consent. It is the dearest wish of his heart."

"And of yours, Philip?"

Grafton lied like a gentleman. With the rich beauty of Kathleen Kirkwood's face smiting him as he spoke, he yet looked steadily at the pathetic face of the young girl so close to him and answered:

“It is the dearest wish of my own, also.”

He stepped nearer to her and stretched out his arms to take her, but the girl put one slender hand upon his breast.

“Wait, Phil,” she said slowly; “I am so young . . . and I have no mother. I wonder what it is best for me to do?”

Perhaps the old man was wrong. It may be that Ariadne did not love him. There might be a way of escape, thought Grafton.

“Do you love me, little sweetheart?” he asked, employing his boyhood pet name for her. There was a touch of eagerness in his question which she mistook.

“Love you, Phil!” Her hands went together against her breast.

The moon had just risen. A broad beam of light streamed through the long window into the otherwise dark room and fell upon her. He was astonished, almost appalled, by the change in her expression. The contrast between her look of a moment before and that present aspect was almost as great as from the darkness in which he stood to the light in which she stood. Yes, his way was dark, her path was light. He had his answer and his sentence in that exclamation. For the first time in his life he had a perception of the possibilities of beauty in that face, and for a second he forgot the Northern woman. He stepped nearer to Ariadne and took her hands.

“Then you accept me?” he said. “You make me very glad. You make your grandfather’s last hours happy. You will be my wife?”

“But . . . but . . . I am only a . . . girl . . . a child . . .” she urged, hesitatingly, forgetful of her claim of the afternoon.

"And a child you shall be until the war is ended. You shall bear my name, dear. I will claim you when the fighting is over."

He drew her toward him, slipped an arm around her and pressed her to his heart. She made no resistance. She trusted herself to him, and she was glad.

"Is it settled, then?" he asked.

"Phil," said the girl suddenly, raising her head. It seemed to her that she had grown years in the last few moments. She laid her hand upon his shoulder and leaned away from him a little, although he still retained his hold upon her. "Do you really love me?"

"I do."

"This is not to please Grandfather?"

Philip shook his head.

"There is no other girl in your heart?"

Philip thanked God for the darkness which concealed his clenched hand.

"No one," he said, forcing the falsehood.

"That girl you wrote about, Kathleen Kirkwood?"

"There is nothing between us."

"On your word of honour, Phil?"

"On my word of honour, there isn't anything between us," he said promptly, glad to be able to assure her of that one fact. "Why do you question me in this way, dearest?"

"I wish to be sure. I am so alone, you see . . . and I don't know. If my mother were only here!"

"Ariadne, I will be mother, father, brother, husband . . . everything . . . to you, if you will only take me," he urged, persuading himself that in all those things she would not mind if he failed to be

that without which all the others were mere empty terms between them—lover!

“Come here, into the light, Philip. Let me look at you,” she said, drawing him forward. “Your face is very white.”

“It is only the moonlight, dear,” he protested.

“You are sure that you love me, only me, and that you really wish me to be your wife?”

“Very sure.”

“Oh, Phil!” cried the girl, with a little movement of lassitude, the tension under which she had laboured relaxing for the moment, “I am so miserable and . . . so happy!”

Her head sank forward, he caught her in his arms and she burst into a flood of tears on his shoulder. She was so young and she had no mother! The man held her against his breast, that frail, slender figure, and thanked God that he had had the courage to withhold the truth from her. He swore in his heart of hearts that that which had been committed to him he should cherish in his soul. By and by he lifted her up and carried her to one of the sofas and laid her down upon it, and bade her rest. He sat beside her and held her slender hand, promising that he would not leave her alone the long night, and kissed her often and spoke to her tenderly, and watched her fall asleep. He sat there in silence with the little hand clasped in his stronger one. If he moved to release her hand, without awakening, she held him with a sudden instinctive tightening of her grasp. He was bound. The hand of the woman who was to be his child-wife, to whom he was about to give the protection of his name, the woman who loved him, held him fast, asleep, awake, in life, in death—forever!

Grafton was not vain, but there had been illumina-

tion even to so modest a soul as his in her look, in her voice, in her bearing in that dark room that told him what depth of passion, what wealth of affection, would be his as the child ripened into womanhood. Yet, clasping the hand of the girl, his thoughts went back to the old farmhouse in the pleasant Pennsylvania hills, to the bright, proud, splendid face of the woman who had mocked him and cast him off in scorn. He would be Ariadne's husband, he would be to her all that a man could be—with his heart forever given to the woman of the North, the girl with the smiling mouth, the red lips, the bright hair, the mocking laugh! But it was hard. He could not realise what it meant; neither what he had lost nor what he had gained.

So through the long hours in one chamber of the house affection watched death, while in another sadness brooded over a troubled yet happy heart. And what would be the end? Philip hoped, he could only hope—that was all.

But that slender child, whose uneasy breathing marked her restless slumber, was not of a race which is content with half a heart, and such devotion as she gave to him could be fairly met and measured by nothing save an equal return. That did not occur to him then, but some day he would awake to the knowledge. She would learn it perhaps and then—her heart would break!

The grey light of the cool dawn was just stealing through the openings of the Venetian blinds when Ariadne awoke to hear a carriage stop on the gravel driveway before the door. The good Bishop, apprised of the urgency of the case, had not waited until morning, but had come at once to marry his young friend and see his old friend die. The doctor, too, weary with his long vigil, had heard the sound. His

exit into the hall and the voice of the venerable old man, even though he spoke softly as he entered the door and asked how did his ancient friend, awakened the Judge.

A moment and the Bishop alone entered the room and knelt praying beside the dying man. The Bishop had lived many years and had served much. His own race was nearly run. The meeting between the two old friends was tender, the one almost over the threshold, the other approaching the door. They had little to say to each other, and their interview was soon over. The Bishop called the doctor, and he summoned Ariadne and Philip.

“He is awake?” asked the girl.

“Yes,” answered the physician, “but there is little time to lose.”

Hand in hand the two young people entered the room.

“It was a marvellous draught,” said the Judge faintly, and they were shocked by the change in him, “I thank you . . . Ellison . . . Ariadne . . . Phil . . . are you ready?”

“Yes, Grandfather,” said the girl, fighting for her courage again.

“Ready, sir,” said Philip.

“William,” said the Judge, turning to the Bishop, his boyhood friend.

“Yes, Henry,” answered the prelate.

“I am dying . . . you know . . . and before I go I wish you to marry . . . Ariadne and Phil here . . . as you married me . . . as you married her mother.”

“Is it your wish, too, my dear?” asked the venerable Bishop.

“Yes, Bishop.”

“And yours, Philip?”

"Yes, Bishop Meade."

The Bishop rose and opened the well-worn Prayer Book which was his constant companion.

"Wait," said the Judge; "I have but little time, but . . . I shall last this out. Your robes of office, Will. I remember . . . how you looked when . . . I stood before you . . . years ago. You were not . . . a Bishop . . . then."

The doctor had hastened out at the Judge's word and came back bringing the Bishop's robe case. Swiftly, but with fingers that trembled not so much from age as feeling, the Bishop adjusted his vestments. He was a soldier in his way, who had met death in the high places upon many a field upon which he reigned supreme, yet he could not recall a sight quite like this. His voice shook, too, as he bade the young people stand before him. The tears dimmed his eyes, he could not see the book. That was no matter; he knew the service by heart, and out of his heart he spoke on that day as he had rarely spoken before.

"Wait," said the Judge once more; "I wish Asa . . . and Aunt Dessy . . . here."

On tiptoe the two negroes, who had been waiting outside the door, came into the room.

"Asa," said his old master, "you belong to me and to my son. . . . I wish to give you . . . your freedom . . . now."

"Doan do dat, Marse Henry! Gimme to Miss A'dny, heah, me an' Aunt Dessy, suh. We doan want no freedom, suh!"

"Nor, suh, Marse Henry," echoed Aunt Dessy, who was Aza's wife. "Dat's right, suh. You ain't gwine to lef' us 'lone widout belongin' to nobody 't all?"

"Well, then," said the Judge, "I give you to your

young mistress. . . She is to be married this morning . . . and I called . . . you in as . . . witnesses. Now, William."

He turned to the clergyman. Solemnly, sadly, the Bishop read the words that bound the two young people together until death did them part. Silent, a darkly pale little figure of repression, Ariadne stood. Stern and still, Philip, in the grey jacket of a private in the old Virginia line, made the responses as if in a dream, fighting within himself a civil war which rent and tore his heart, with a woman of the South arrayed against a woman of the North; one claiming him through duty, the other through love, awakening to find himself at last in honour bound.

As the Bishop laid his hands in blessing upon the bowed heads of the two kneeling before him, there was a little silence in the room. Presently the Bishop turned to his old friend. The Judge had struggled to lift himself upon his arm. His face was turned toward the open window. Far up the river the glow of the sunrise tinged the woods and fields and turned the water into gold. The light fell upon his white face. The breeze of the morning stirred his white hair in tender caress.

"Thank God," he murmured, "it is done. Ariadne will be happy. . . Good bless you, Phil!"

Mechanically Jeff had gone out at sunrise and hoisted the flag. The old man saw it rising on the staff.

"What flag is that? Virginia . . . God bless her . . . and save the United States. See . . ." he lifted his hand, "the day breaks."

He fell softly back upon the pillows and lay quite still.

"The day breaks," said the Bishop solemnly, lay-

ing his hand upon the lightless eyes of his old friend;
“the day breaks and the shadows flee away.”

So with the dawn the soul of the Judge entered
that other country from whose unity there is no
secession.

CHAPTER V

AGE AND YOUTH—AND A WOMAN

Two days after his death they buried the old Judge in the little graveyard by the side of the chapel on the slope of the hill facing the river. On one side of him lay Ariadne, his wife, on the other, Ariadne, his daughter, while at the foot of the grave stood Ariadne, his grandchild, last of her race. On the right of his girl-wife, clad in his plain grey soldier's jacket, stood her husband, holding her lightly by the arm. On the other side of her stood a tall, imposing-looking man of middle age. He was booted and spurred for riding, and wore a handsome grey uniform with three gold stars on the collar. His face was ruddy, his hair was dark and thick, and like his moustache was slightly tinged with grey. He wore no beard then. His head was a noble one and his countenance revealed at a glance his high character and suggested that "perfect balance of faculties, mental, moral, and physical," which his subsequent career showed he enjoyed.

He was the busiest man in Richmond at the time, but he had ridden down to Vallewis when his friend and counsellor, Bishop Meade, told him of the death of the Judge, to do him honour on the day of his funeral.

There were other gentlemen present, mostly old men, from neighbouring plantations, and many women, young and old, who had not gone to Richmond or to camp to be near loved ones in the army. Back of all were the house servants and plantation

slaves, tears glistening on their black faces as they listened to the white-haired Bishop reading those last words of farewell. All those present in their several stations had loved and honoured the Judge. They had enjoyed his friendship, they had followed his counsel, they had obeyed his commands, they would remember him with affection and regret; yet, under the circumstances, it does no violence to the sincerity of their grief to say that they had a deeper interest in the living than in the dead.

'Tis life that appeals to man. There is but one answer to Rip Van Winkle's pathetic question, "Are we then so soon forgotten?" The eyes of all present were turned from the narrow flower-strewn opening, from the beloved form of the old Bishop, from the casket upon which the earth fell from friendly hands with a caressing touch, to seek the three figures at the foot of the grave.

Philip represented the young manhood of Virginia, its dauntless courage, its unbounded enthusiasm, its absolute devotion, its willingness to fight to the bitter end for a principle it believed to be right. The elder man typified the ineffable dignity, the royal majesty, the profound ability of the South. Not an unknown man he of the greying hair and the three stars, but with the greater part of his marvellous reputation still in the future. Robert E. Lee, as he stood there on that sunny summer morning, illustrated the character and quality, as he bore the hopes, of those upon whom the burden of the struggle must fall. Between the two, so frail, so delicate, so dainty, yet so brave and so undaunted, was a Southern woman, leaning upon one, looking up to the other. The object of one's devotion and the other's protection, she was a living suggestion of the country for which they were both to fight to the bitter end.

Nor did there seem anything incongruous in this conjunction of major-general and private soldier. They were both gentlemen of the old stock, and although it was given to one to sway the destinies of thousands, to determine great events, to hold armies in the hollow of his hand, while the other was but a single pawn on the great chess-board upon which masters were to play the mighty game of war, each was giving his all, himself. Each was doing his best, learning and labouring truly, as the good Bishop might have said with catechetical remembrance, in that state of life unto which it had pleased God to call him.

Beneath the sadness and solemnity befitting the occasion which had brought them together, different emotions were present in the faces of those two. Grafton had other cause for grief than in the death of his friend and the secession of his state. Ariadne was visibly present by his side; his hand clasped her own; should she lean toward him his arm would enfold her. Yet he did not have to close his eyes or turn his head to see Kathleen Kirkwood, nor was she less really present to him than was his wife.

In the first days of his marriage the irrevocable nature of the situation came home to him with ever increasing force, and the sense of his sacrifice grew upon him until he felt that he should grow mad in playing a part. Not that he did not love Ariadne, but that he loved the Northern woman more. Indeed, his heart went out to the mournful little figure of his wife. He pitied her; he was wishful, earnest, to promote her happiness; yet the very fact that he was tied, fettered, bound to her turned the ordinary affection he had borne her in the long days of their comradeship together into something that at first

blush seemed almost like hatred. And he fought stoutly against such a feeling.

He had kissed her with a glad heart many times, and, indeed, it was a very kissable mouth that she lifted up to him from time to time, but now to caress her in the most casual way required a constraint that almost unmanned him. Fortunately for him, the demands of the situation while her grandfather lay unburied, the many duties devolved upon them both, the necessity laid upon him to ride to Richmond and ask a furlough for a week to arrange his affairs, had kept the two apart most of the time. As she stood there by his side, however, he realised that the morrow must bring forth some sort of accounting.

He cursed himself for a fool to have heeded the Judge's pleading, whenever he was away from his wife. He said to himself that Kathleen's fiery word, her rejection, was not final; that had he been more patient he might have won her back again; but when he was with Ariadne, when his better nature was uppermost, he was not sorry. At least he was glad that he had been permitted to sacrifice himself for his old friend and counsellor, and he swore to make the girl happy. When he saw the love and devotion she expressed whenever she was alone in his presence, and even in spite of herself when others were near, when he marked the way her eye dwelt upon him, how her soul seemed to seek his, he cursed himself again that wayward fate did not allow him to return that treasure of affection which she lavished upon him.

The struggle had written something of this in his face. But he was a young man. He had put on a soldier's jacket. The call to arms rang in his ear. He had never seen fighting; he knew nothing of the wearying days in camp, of the long marching under

blazing sun; of picket guard on frozen snow; of the unprotected body, naked and fever-racked; of the searing wound; of hours of exhaustion and neglect on some rain-washed battlefield, or in some ill-provided hospital; of burning thirst, of racking pain; the nervous agony of starvation; the humiliation of defeat—its despair. All this was war—real war. If men realised it beforehand perhaps there would be less enthusiasm for fighting.

As Philip saw it, war was action, a brilliant chance to do and dare, to brave death in the high places of the field, to follow the advanced flag in the front of the cheering line. It was to strike home upon the enemy that dared assail the state of old Virginia. It was to fight with the valour and courage of the cavaliers who had stood for Church and King in the old land, who had fought for right and freedom in the new. Sometimes he forgot for the moment both Ariadne and Kathleen and threw his head back confident of the future and triumphant therein.

The older man was wiser. A touch of sadness not altogether due to respect for his departed friend lingered on his handsome face. Yet he was not a sad man; melancholy never marked him for her own. There was a sternness, too, in the close-shut lips, in the direct glance of those deep brown eyes, tender and gentle enough, yet with a fire lurking in their depths that could flash on occasion. There was in his bearing a serenity, a confidence, a certain proud assurance that only ability can give to those conscious of their powers. An assurance modestly borne without parade or pretence. This man knew what war was. He had heard the bullets whistle; he had set squadrons, planted guns, and led charges; he had ridden with wrung heart over fields of victory only less horrible than plains of defeat. Here was

a man who had none of the illusions of youth. He realised as Philip could not—although Philip knew more than most of the men of his day—just what was before him. The years of struggle and toil, of labour and thought, of marches and fights incredible, of triumphs and defeats, of success and failure.

Experience and ignorance, age and youth, they wear not the same front before the world; yet within both these men there were points of resemblance as well as of difference. They possessed alike the same knightly courage, the same brilliant daring, the same fire and energy. His few years had not checked the development of these attributes in the one; his many years had not altered these qualities in the other.

Ariadne's tender bosom shook with her deep breathing, but she made no sound. She endured all without a murmur, without a complaint. She could suffer and be silent—the supremest exhibition of woman's courage! Yet her grief that day was not what it might have been were it not for the man at her side whose name she bore. The old love is ever lost in the new. Even in that hour—did she hate herself for it, or was she glad?—her thoughts were turned from that which was dead in the ground at her feet to that which was alive by her side. The touch of his hand upon her arm thrilled her. The new thing had come to her. Unconsciously at first she had loved Philip. She did not understand exactly what the feelings were that surged in her young bosom. She did not realise what they were. She was so inexperienced, so young, and she had no mother into whose loving ears she could pour her tale of hopes and fears and maidenly dreams.

When he had asked her to marry him, when he had said he loved her, when he had assured her there was no one else—Philip, who could not lie—she

realised then how much she had hated that Northern woman with whose name his letters had been filled. Now—now, she only pitied her. For Philip was hers, alone, forever! Ariadne stood face to face with death; bereavement had swept from her suddenly him who had hitherto been all in all to her, but she stood face to face with life as well. She had been born again in her heart. Love was quickened within her; she was Philip's and Philip was hers! She thought herself heartless; she wept bitter tears for the old man. She tried to silence the song in her soul, but it would not be. The supreme fact for her was that Philip and she were married.

Womanlike, at first, she dwelt not so much upon his love for her as upon hers for him. Later the other side would be in evidence to her. Now she revelled in her own passion; she luxuriated in it. His word, his touch, his kiss had opened the flood-gates of her being and the waters were out. I wonder what the old Judge would have thought of it all if he could have come back? Ah, well, the happiness of the dead is that they cannot come back to see how soon they are forgotten! There is always a first place in every human heart, and rarely, indeed, is it filled by those who have gone away.

So they stood, typical of the situation, by the body of an old relationship already forgot, confronting new conditions: age and youth—and a woman.

CHAPTER VI

“SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY”

THAT afternoon the lawyer came. The kind friends had all gone and left them. Some of the women had volunteered to stay with Ariadne, but Philip, whose instinct was not at fault, had gently declined their proffered services. For himself he would have preferred not to be left alone with his wife, but he knew well what her pleasure would be, and he resolutely set himself to subordinate his own desires, so far as he could, to hers.

The lawyer had important documents to read, important messages to communicate. Ariadne must hear them. But Philip chose to tell his wife the sad news in his own way, and after a brief conference with the attorney he sought her.

“Not there,” she said as he turned toward the library; “it was in there that grandfather died. We will go in here,”—she pointed toward the drawing-room—“it was there you told me that you loved me. I must put aside the past . . .” her lips trembled—“I must live for you now. You are a soldier and I am a soldier’s wife. Grandfather would have it so.”

Hand-in-hand they stepped into the drawing-room. On one of the walls hung a portrait of the Judge taken in his prime, standing as was the fashion, with one hand thrust in the breast of his blue swallow-tail coat, the other uplifted in the characteristic gesture he was wont to employ in the

Senate when men hung on the honeyed eloquence of those lips now so peacefully still in the churchyard fronting the river—the river that ever flowed on, washing the shores of Vallewis, although the last of the great race which had made it a home was gone and strangers would henceforth be its lords paramount.

Once in the room Grafton stopped uncertainly. Ariadne sat down in the great chair which had been brought from England, two hundred years before, from which the lords of the manor had dispensed justice in Colonial days, and her husband knelt by her side. How little she looked in that great rude throne; yet there was a sort of majesty and dignity about the child, a beauty spirituelle, unearthly, in the pale face rising above the black robe, that moved him strangely. He smiled at her, and, quick to note his every mood, she questioned:

“Why do you smile at me, Phil?”

“You are so young,” he said tenderly, lifting her little hand and pressing a kiss upon it, “so young to be a wife!”

“But that is a fault every day will mend,” she replied anxiously. “The war will soon be over. I shall try so hard, while I wait for you, to fit myself for you when you come to . . . to take me.”

“You are fit now, little sweetheart, to be the wife of a better man than I.”

“There is no better, and I am not, but it makes me very happy to hear you say so. If you will allow me I will stay here at Vallewis, where everybody loves me, with old Aza and dear Aunt Dessy to take care of me, with all my people. You shall tell me what to do, what books to read, how to order my life, and I will try so hard! I am growing very fast. Grandfather used to say that I would be a tall girl

sometime, and I shall live outdoors and grow strong and well. If I could only be beautiful, like my mother!"

"My dear, my dear," cried Grafton, choking back the tears, "you do not know how unworthy of you I am . . ."

"But you love me, don't you? You said you did and . . ."

"I do, I do!" protested the man, and for the moment he did and the words rang true.

Ariadne flushed softly, not deeply; the delicate paleness of her cheek took upon itself the hue of the wild rose. She would be a dainty woman, as she was a dainty child—and a beautiful one. Some day Master Philip might find that out—too late.

"If you love me," said Ariadne softly, "I do not mind anything else."

"Do you mean that?"

"Of course I mean it."

"Then . . . that makes it . . . easier to . . ."

"It makes what easier?" asked the girl as Grafton hesitated.

"What I have to tell you," he continued, reluctantly, yet impelled by stern necessity.

"What is it you have to tell me? You . . . you love me still?" she asked anxiously, bending closer to him, her soul in her eyes.

There was something in the situation that did not quite satisfy Ariadne, a doubt, an incertitude, that she fought against. Philip had said again and again that he loved her—yet—yet—

"It's not that," said the young man, "but . . . I hate to say it. You cannot stop at Vallewis."

"Don't you wish me to do so? Very well, then, if it is your desire."

"My wishes have nothing to do with it."

"They have everything to do with me," said the girl, glad to submit the direction of herself to him.

"Vallewis does not belong to you any longer, dear," he said abruptly, seeing that she would not understand.

"Not belong? What do you mean, Philip?"

Then Grafton told her the whole sad story. The place was gone, she owned not a foot of it, not a slave, not a horse or a cow, nothing but her mother's jewels, her grandfather's books and her own clothing. These the old man had had foresight to save for her. It was a bitter blow for the girl.

"And . . . instead of bringing you this great plantation . . . I . . . I have nothing," she murmured, "not even a slave."

"Aza and Aunt Dessy are yours, the lawyer tells me."

"And the house must be sold?"

"Yes, but the slaves are not to be sold down the river. The planters of the vicinity will buy them and families will not be separated. I shall buy Jeff myself for my body-servant."

"I am so glad of that. Since I am married I understand better than before what it must be to separate man and wife."

"If there is anything else you wish, dear, it shall be bought for you."

"Bonnibel, my horse?"

"Of course."

"And the pictures?"

"Yes, certainly, and your piano."

"That will be all. Shall I live at Braeside then?"

She was taking it bravely, he saw. And he gloried at the pride of race that enabled her to sustain these successive shocks with such dauntless fortitude and calm.

“Will you be guided by me?” he asked.

“In everything,” she replied, giving him her hand again.

“Then go to Richmond. Mrs. Galloway is a connection of mine. She lives alone in a great big house in a retired section of the city. She will be delighted to have you there.”

“It is settled, then,” answered Ariadne, rising; “I suppose there are some papers that I must sign?”

“A few. The lawyer is waiting in the library.”

“Let us have it over with as soon as possible then.”

“It must be,” said Philip, “since my furlough expires day after to-morrow. All must be settled before then.”

Three days later Ariadne and Philip stood together in the library of Mrs. Galloway's house in Richmond. It was a pleasant house, standing back from the street in a grassy lawn bordered with trees. It was not like the great rambling plantation house, with its thousands of acres of valley and hill, or meadow and woodland, around it, yet it would serve Ariadne until her husband came back.

She had a pretty suite of rooms. Her own piano stood in her parlor, the best of her grandfather's books lined the walls and the pictures of her own people hung from every point of display. Back of them was her room. Money was plentiful in the Confederacy in those days and it was as good as gold. Grafton, as if to make amends by material gifts for his lack of love, had not stinted his wife in any way. Everything luxurious that the city afforded was at her disposal, but with the simplicity of taste which had distinguished her ancestors she had furnished her bed-chamber in white. It was as virginal, as pure, as innocent, as her heart. Many a time in wearying campaigns, in the long, silent night marches, did Philip's

mind revert to that white chamber and its loving inmate.

Ariadne would have given herself to him then and there unreservedly, but the promise made to the dead was sacred. Philip was glad to have it so. She was yet but a child, too young to be burdened with a woman's responsibilities. She had troubles, griefs and anxieties enough in her heart. When the war would be over, if he lived to come back again and claim her, he would do so. If he died—all that he had would be hers.

It had been a terrible thing for Ariadne to part with her slaves, who had known her from birth, as they crowded about her sobbing and weeping, kissing the hem of her garment, and she had almost broken down. She thought that the limit of endurance had been reached then, but when Philip stood before her ready to leave her, the loss of her grandfather, the farewell to her people, the parting with her property, were as nothing to her. Then and there her heart broke.

“Oh, Phil!” she cried, “don't go! I can't give you up! You are all I have. Let others fight for Virginia! It breaks my heart to . . .”

“Is this the spirit of the South?” asked Philip tenderly, a growing pity for her in his heart.

The parting was a sadness to him, but it was a relief as well. As he had felt at the farmhouse at York a short time before, when Kathleen drove him away, he could understand how Ariadne must feel now. Yet there were depths in his girl-wife's heart greater than any that Philip's experience called upon him to sound. His love for Kathleen Kirkwood, deep and abiding as he believed it to be, was evanescent, a trifle, compared to the devotion of poor truthful little Ariadne.

"You must not give way," he said, gently laying his hand upon her head. Philip could be so tender, so kind—yet there was always something lacking, she thought. Was he afraid of her or—— "It's for Virginia, you know," he went on, "and you would not love me if I did not go."

"Yes, yes," sobbed the girl, "I know. That is the way I ought to feel. I do feel so, now, but I cannot bear to see you go. You see Virginia has so many and I have only . . . you."

"I shall come back to you," said Grafton, with the confidence he did not feel, and his words did not voice a hope he cherished greatly, either—"never fear. We shall have many years together. You will get tired of me."

"Never, never!" cried the girl. "You will write to me often?"

"Whenever I can in the camp."

"And I will write you every day," she said. "I will keep a journal; I will put down my heart that you may see it and know there is nothing in it but you. I shall try to be ready for you when you come to claim me."

Could it be possible that only a week had elapsed since Philip had tossed Ariadne up in the air in his arms on the gallery at Vallewiss that evening? She looked older already, more mature. Not in person, but in face, in bearing. The war would soon be over. Would she be indeed a woman before it ended?

There was a sudden blare of bugles, a rattling of drums up the street. The regiment to which Philip belonged was marching. It was a curious-looking regiment. Philip's company and one or two others were uniformed in Confederate grey, but other companies had dressed themselves in accordance with their fancy and there had not yet been time to make the

uniforms alike. In only one thing was there uniformity, and that was the cheerful alacrity with which the jolly, light-hearted young men followed its flag. It was a sort of military picnic for them. Well, the jollity and carelessness would be shot out of the survivors in a few battles. A campaign or two would make all the uniforms of a similar pattern of dilapidation. The new flag would be torn to rags, bullet-ripped, shot-slashed, but the courage, the daring, the dash and zeal were abiding possessions of those men, and nothing could ever abate them.

Ariadne heard the music as the column turned the corner.

“Here comes the regiment,” cried Philip, his face ashine. “I promised to join the company as it came up. Good-bye, dear, and God bless you.”

He strained her to his breast. She threw her slender arms about his neck and hung upon his lips until he tore himself away. Ariadne thought she should die as she heard his footfall upon the gallery, but the spirit of the Southern woman—nay, the loving woman everywhere—was summoned to her aid. She stepped out upon the gallery and ran down the walk, stopping under the magnolia trees that overshadowed the gate, a slender little figure, white-faced, clad in black. She laid her hand upon her heart, and, lifting the other, waved a little Confederate flag that she had caught from the table in the hall. The soldiers saw it and laughed and cheered.

“Good for the little one!” shouted one of them.

A little one indeed, with her wifehood light upon her. By and by down the street came Philip’s company carrying the colours. At its head marched young Oakley, Mamie Dylett’s husband. There were others there who knew Ariadne. They had heard of her marriage.

“Three cheers for Mrs. Grafton!” shouted one.

There wasn't much discipline in that army just then. The men learned that later under fire in ways that made them never forget it, and it was rather a tumultuous crowd of waving hats and uplifted guns that swept on before her. In all the noise she had eyes but for one man, Philip, dogged, stern, not partaking of the jollity, but smiling up at her nevertheless. She watched him until she lost him in the confusion. She could stand no more. She turned and ran to her room and, throwing herself upon the lonely little white bed, sobbed and sobbed as if her heart would break; sobbed as she had not done when she left her old home, when she had bidden farewell to her people, when she said good-bye to her dead grandfather.

Philip, Philip, whom she loved, was gone to the wars, and she, like woman from time immemorial, could only wait and weep. So runs the world away!

Old Aunt Dessy found her there when the dark had fallen. She took her up in her strong arms, undressed her like a child, as she had done many times before, and cuddled her to sleep on her own broad black bosom.

BOOK TWO

The Times that Tried

CHAPTER VII

THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Two years had passed since that day Philip Grafton had said good-bye to Ariadne his wife and had gone away to the wars. In all the hard campaigning of those two years he had done his share. He had marched and fought, he had advanced and retreated, he had starved and thirsted, he had been burned and frozen. He had seen victory often and defeat sometimes. Opportunities for brilliant service had come to him and he had availed himself of them. In spite of this and because there was no provision for quick promotion from the ranks for bravery and soldiery ability in the Confederate army—fatal defect!—Grafton had not been awarded the coveted shoulder straps, although upon his arms he sported the chevrons of a sergeant.

He had become, however, one of the finest soldiers that ever obeyed a command. Two years of marching and fighting, of drill and discipline in camp and on field, and under fire, had forged that Army of Northern Virginia into an exquisitely tempered, thoroughly tested weapon of offence and defence, fitted to the hand of Lee and used by him with the ease and effectiveness of a skilled swordsman wielding a Toledo blade.

In that most notable of all the armies of the world there were literally hundreds of gentlemen like Grafton, of birth, refinement and education, who had acquired enough knowledge of the art of war in their two years of service, under such masters as Lee, Long-

street, Jackson and Stuart, to entitle them, if capacity counted, to any command, who were yet in the ranks—and some of them remained in the ranks until the final muster out! Better, it is said, is an army of stags led by a lion than an army of lions led by a stag; but this was an army of lions led by a lion, and it is no disparagement to that gallant opponent of equal fame with which the Army of Northern Virginia struggled upon a hundred fields and which finally wore it down, the Army of the Potomac, to say that probably no finer army was ever assembled under one flag, animated by one purpose, amenable to one man, than that body of soldiers which was born at Manassas and died at Appomattox—the followers of Lee.

Yet there was rarely a time in the four years of its history when the Army of Northern Virginia was not hungry; there was rarely a time when it was not in part at least naked. It was generally unshod and half-clothed, the half raiment that it wore being taken from the enemy. Its arms were inferior in quality, its powder was generally bad, its uniforms things to be jeered at. In but one thing did it equal its bountifully provided, thoroughly equipped antagonist. That was its patriotism, its unconquerable courage. In but one thing did it surpass its brave opponent. That was the quality of its leadership. That was enough! The man of the South was as true a patriot in his own eyes—and in mine—as the man of the North. With one his native land for which he fought was the state, with the other, the United States. That was the only difference. It was to settle which was right, practically as well as theoretically, that the war was prosecuted until the last bitter end. The fact that in the argument of force the final decision was against the Southerner ought not, can not, be allowed to impugn his patriotism!

Another difference between the Northern and Southern troops was this: there were few mercenary soldiers in Lee's army; the Confederates would have used them gladly, if they had been available without doubt, but there were none to be had. The Army of Northern Virginia was a homogeneous force. There were differences between the Virginia and Texas divisions as wide as the leagues which separated the two great states, but a common purpose, a common hope and a common leader made them one and the same. And they were all Americans of purest strain. When it came to fighting and dying, the blood of the cavalier was not poured out more freely than the blood of the mountaineer or the plainsman.

It does no violence to the well-merited claims to distinction of other divisions of that army to say that perhaps the flower of them all was that noble five thousand, the Virginia division commanded by Pickett, which was a part of Longstreet's first army corps. The fame of Longstreet has been somewhat obscured by that of Jackson, yet Lee himself said that Longstreet was the best marcher that he ever saw—that in spite of the fact that Jackson's men were habitually called the "foot cavalry." As for fighting ability, not even the old Stonewall brigade itself could surpass them. All the men of the organisation, from Armistead, Garnett, Kemper, and Corse, the brigadiers, down to the humblest private, felt proud to belong to the Virginia division. There were other Virginia regiments brigaded with the different regiments of other state troops, but Pickett's was the only division of the army to which none but Virginians were admitted. Its officers were as jealously exclusive in admitting men to their ranks as they were proud of its reputation for efficiency and courage.

Grafton, like many of his fellows, would rather be a private under Pickett than an officer under someone else. His was the first regiment of Armistead's brigade. The brigade lay at ease with two others—Corse's brigade, to its eternal regret, was in the rear guarding communications—on the reverse slope of a certain hill on the afternoon of July 3, 1863. The men lounged under the trees awaiting the order to advance. In front of them the crest of the hill which afforded them concealment and shelter blazed like a volcano and thundered like a tornado. The response from the opposing hill was even greater, and the roaring from hundreds of cannon shattered the heavens and shook the earth.

Pickett's men were waiting the order to advance, eagerly awaiting. Across the ridges and valleys surrounding a little Pennsylvania town for two days their brothers in arms had been fighting a desperate battle with the army of General Meade. Lee had not succeeded in routing that army, but on each day he had gained inspiring successes. The Confederates hoped to crown their achievements by piercing the center of the Army of the Potomac, riving it asunder, shattering it and driving it in disorderly retreat on this, the third day, of the most Titanic conflict which had been waged upon the continent.

The word had been passed among Pickett's men that Lee expected these Virginians to lead the assault, that he depended upon them; and without looseness of tongue or braggart boast—which ill become the veteran—they expressed themselves as firmly resolved not to fail him. They knew that no child's play lay before them. The army they were to be hurled against had usually been badly commanded during its existence; its units had frequently been placed in untenable positions; it had often been sent

on impossible errands, by unskilled, impracticable officers; but whenever there was any real fighting to be done and it had come in actual contact with the Army of Northern Virginia, its struggle had called out to the last limit the manhood and the courage of the great men who followed the St. Andrew's Cross.

Just how tremendous was the task to which they had been assigned, they could not realise on that side of Seminary Ridge on which they lay. Some of them laughed and jested. Some of them played games. Others passed the time in more quiet pursuits. There were many men in many moods in such an array, but when the time came he who talked would fight neither more nor less determinedly than he who had been silent. The man who was sad would go into battle with the same resolution as the man who was glad.

Philip Grafton was one of the quiet men. One woman can usually fill the heart of a man, but present to him before every battle were two, Ariadne, his wife in the quiet home at Richmond; Kathleen Kirkwood in the one in York. There across those hills beyond that distant crest whence came the hurtling shells lay the home of the Northern girl. Like a shuttle his mind went back and forth between Virginia and Pennsylvania. He had seen Ariadne a few times, although he might have seen her a great many more than he had if he had so willed. But he gladly welcomed the press of duties which kept him with the army and only upon rare occasions did he ask for a furlough to Richmond.

Oftentimes when the army was near the capital Ariadne would have ridden Bonibell out to see her husband, but she had learned that Philip did not approve of women in camp and his lightest wish was law to her. She, too, had bided her time. The two

years had made of her not a soldier, but a woman. The privations that afterward came to the South at that time had not been keenly felt by the people of that land. There came a time when the women denied themselves the necessaries of life to feed the soldiers, and some starved to death to put bread in the mouth of the men at arms, but that time was still in the future. There were, of course, many luxuries with which the women of the South were forced to dispense, and the number of these daily increased with the growing stringency of the life-throttling blockade, but of the real necessaries there was yet an abundance. Grafton's wife had plenty to eat, a comfortable place to live in, and, chiefest of all human blessings, work to do.

She had developed amazingly physically and mentally, especially in the last year. Grafton, lying on the reverse slope of Seminary Ridge at Gettysburg, reflected that he had not seen her for nearly a year. How pretty she had been when he last looked upon her! He was wondering how she looked now. She would be a beautiful woman some day, he thought, and she was his. No one could be more completely devoted to another than she to him. If he could only return it! He still cherished an ideal adoration for Kathleen Kirkwood. He was not of a race which changes its livery of heart lightly, but he would not have been human if he had not taken satisfaction in Ariadne's growing beauty. He pictured her in the virginal whiteness of her bed-chamber which he himself had so fitted for her at her request. He saw her standing under the magnolia trees at the gate waiting.

Deep down in Philip's heart a change was working. Use, habit, custom, still kept him true to the Northern girl, but Ariadne was dearer to him than

ever before. The long letters moiled with her kisses which she sent him by every available means were so passionately sweet, the revelation of her heart had been so frank and so innocent, that no man could fail to be affected by them. At first she had prattled on the pages like the child she was, but as she grew older a certain sweet reserve crept into her writing that piqued him, aroused his curiosity, stimulated his affection. She could not conceal her adoration for the man, yet she checked herself when she began to dwell upon it. Her letters were full of stops, sentences unended, phrases broken, with tales begun that were not finished. Ariadne was very real to Philip, and Kathleen Kirkwood was only a memory, a dream. If things should go on as they had the real would oust the remembrance, the concrete fact would shatter, as it always does, the abstraction.

Poor little Ariadne! How she tried to be worthy of her husband, and how unworthy felt that man who could as yet make no adequate return for that devotion. Ariadne was not happy in the situation; neither was she satisfied. No one had dreamed the war would last so long. Grafton was in no hurry to claim his wife, she realised painfully. He did not come so often to see her as he might. Young husbands would burst in upon other young wives of her acquaintance, sweep them to the hearts that beat only for them in a whirlwind of kisses, linger for a few hours and ride away. Philip came so infrequently and stayed so short a time. When he was with her, although he was kindness and consideration itself, there was something lacking. She thrilled to the pressure of his lips, but her own kisses evoked no response. Yet Philip seemed devoted enough, his letters were gentle, tender, but she missed something. Her passion struck no spark of fire from his heart.

Poor Ariadne did not know what was the matter. She fancied that she herself was at fault in some way. She would not see anything wrong with her idol, and so she redoubled her efforts to please.

It was touching; it was pitiful. Grafton strove to assume a virtue which he could not exhibit, but his success was not apparent. By and by a fear began to possess him that some day she would find out the truth, and that would break her heart. In that fear he came less than ever to see her, although he tried to make his letters doubly affectionate. Love that is strong as death is effortless, and the attempt was a failure.

Yet Ariadne was not altogether unhappy. She resolutely dismissed her vague suspicions so far as she could. She set herself to dispel her dissatisfaction. She chided herself for feeling that something was lacking in her love story, and always she blamed herself for an unworthiness which did not permit her to measure up to the high stature in which she had imagined him. If she were different, he would be also. Alas, love knows no difference of that kind.

She wrote him daily letters, taking advantage of every opportunity to send him a little bundle of closely written sheets, and she treasured the missives, brief and infrequent, but kind—always that—written on marches, by camp fires, prayer on the eve of battle, after the fighting assurance that she received from her husband. She had work to do. There was plenty of work for the women of Richmond in making clothing for the soldiers, in knitting socks for them, in making bandages for the wounded. And Ariadne kept Philip well provided for. Unconsciously she felt some of the brooding care of a mother in her heart—that child!—as she sewed and stitched for her absent soldier. There were other

opportunities for service, too, like the privilege of assisting the doctors and nurses in the hospitals when some great battle strained the resources of the proud little city beyond its capacity.

Indeed, if it had not been for this opportunity to work she and many another woman in the South would have died of nervous anxiety. After every action, with thousands of her sisters, how she scanned the papers for the long lists of killed, wounded and missing, looking with a stopped heart for the beloved name. She thanked God night and morning that she had never read her husband's name in the list of heroes who had passed beyond, and she remembered him with a fervor and fervency born of love and faith and prayed God to watch over and care for the one she loved best on earth. Nor was her devotion selfish, for in her petitions she included all the men and women who in their several stations with equal courage were fighting for their country. Many a soldier on the field was nerved to higher deed at the thought of some woman at home who held him in her heart of hearts and told God of her feelings and her hopes for him—and one of them was Philip.

News of the battle of Gettysburg had reached Richmond almost as soon as it was begun. The old men and boys and all the women there knew that Lee and his legions were being hurled upon the Federal troops in the Pennsylvania hills. Ariadne had learned that Pickett's division had not been engaged during the famous fighting of the first two days of the struggle. She was enough of a soldier—every woman in the South and many in the North had learned the principles of military manœuvring, strategy and tactics in those days—to know that the battle would not be ended without the Virginia division being permitted to share in it. She guessed,

as many a daughter of the Old Dominion, that for a fresh division like that of Pickett's some desperate endeavour would be appointed.

She spent the hours of that long afternoon on her knees in prayer for the man she loved, and for all those dear to every other woman, for the great captain and his men. In the fervency of her devotion she wrestled with the Divine as Jacob at Bethel wrestled with the angel. Well Philip and his comrades needed those prayers. If ever men were placed in a situation of extreme peril and unsurmountable danger, it was this Virginia division, which sprang to its feet at the call of its different captains, and in three long lines slowly mounted the slope and stood upon the ridge amid the hot and now silent cannon staring down the smoke-filled valley spread before them.

CHAPTER VIII

OH, THE WILD CHARGE THEY MADE!

FRONTING them a mile away rose another range of hills roughly paralleling the ridge upon which they stood. The ground sloped gently down from their feet until it met a country road running diagonally upon a slight rise through the valley. On the east side of the road there was a dip and then a sudden rise—a partial ravine or swale—in the ground which thereafter rose gently by easy ascents to the top of the opposite line of hills.

Far to the left, bathed in the brilliant sunshine of the long midsummer afternoon, the sky above them bright with light, not a cloud floating overhead, lay the buildings of a little Pennsylvania town. Church spires rose above it pointing heavenward—as spires should—while upon the earth beneath men played the game of hell. In front of and to the right of the Virginians lay a ruined peach orchard, to the left of that what had been a wheat field. Clumps of trees here and there dotted the valley. Farmhouses with huge barns and outbuildings attached clung along the road. Save for a faint blue haze, the light mist of smoke that still hung over the valley, the scene was as peaceful as it had been four days before when the converging of great armies upon this field had not been dreamed of.

Topping the ridge upon the other side were long lines of men in blue. They were not distinguishable to the Virginians save as thin streaks of dark colour against the yellow earth or the green grass. These

men occupied positions a little below the crest of that opposing range of hills. Along the line at intervals flagstuffs upreared themselves; banners bright with stripes and stars fluttered gaily in the wind. Against the skyline, wherever trees permitted, great guns were silhouetted. The smoke was thickest about the guns, but the breeze blowing down the valley from the north was rapidly driving it away.

Two great armies for two long hot summer days had been tearing at each other's throats in a terrific death grapple. Every foot of that valley had been fought over. The peach orchard was almost cut to pieces by the stream of bullets that had swept through it. The wheat field had been trampled into a sodden mass of mire whose solvent had been the blood of men. In the barns and outhouses were great gaping holes that told of bursting shells, and some that had been happy homes of yesterday were now open to the sky in smouldering ruins. Not a square yard of earth scarcely that had not welcomed to its dust what had once been a man, and many of these square yards still upbore their dead tenants.

Off to the right were two steeper hills, the Round Tops. Not Chickamauga itself would see a deadlier struggle than had taken place the day before to seize those conical projections. Well was the spot beneath them called the Devil's Den, for the place had been piled so thick with slain that they had hidden the shamed face of Mother Earth, and men might walk from one end to the other upon them where they still lay unheeded. Let the dead bury the dead is an injunction to which battles always give heed.

A strange silence, a solemn hush, had fallen over the whole scene as if nature itself took breath with a heart beating stilly before the approaching shock of charging troops. Not a single gun roared its

hoarse note of defiance and sped its missile of destruction toward the foe on either hill. To the north, to the south, even around the great grey crescent encircling the compacter blue lines to the far east, the combat had ceased as if by unanimous consent. There was a concentration of interest where there was a concentration of force.

Those Virginians of the valley, the knightliest race upon the continent, were about to attempt a deed which should be celebrated in song and story, which for hardihood and courage was never to be surpassed. They were going to charge and break that waiting blue line. The fate of the Confederacy was to be determined then and there. With these brave men under the stars and stripes brushed aside, routed, driven headlong in defeat, with that splendid army crumpled and crushed, the result would be certain. New York, Philadelphia, even Washington itself, would be at the disposal of Lee. If the Virginians failed, all the desperate fighting of two years which had gone before would have been unavailing. It would all have to be begun over again, and begun under circumstances and conditions which held little promise of success. Failure wrote a doom sentence large upon the wall which the prescient alone might read—a doom sentence no less accurate because the millions could not, or would not, understand. Yet the soldiers who were there did dimly and in part discern the meaning of the moment, the result for which they so proudly endeavoured.

Ordinary troops detailed to lead a charge like that would have seen only the immediate issue to the effort, but those Virginians were different. As they realised what success meant, they saw in part, at least, the meaning of failure. They were not going to fail! It was a forlorn hope perhaps, but they

intended to convert it into a real thing. To achieve the impossible?—they were accustomed to do that!

There was some hesitation at first. Not hesitation among the men, oh, no! They were like eager hounds held in leash with the quarry before them. The great soldier who commanded the corps, better judge than the rank and file, hesitated to give the order which devoted the five thousand Virginians to annihilation as he saw it. Their own Virginia general, stark, strong, his auburn hair falling on his shoulders, his cap raked over his ear, looking the dashing cavalier that he was on his great black horse, rode up to the tall bearded man standing with his staff in advance of the line. There was a little colloquy between them. Would Longstreet give the order, the order which must be given? No! He stood silent. Wiser than the rest, he recognised here an impossibility to which even the Virginians were unequal.

“I shall lead my men forward then, General,” said Pickett. Longstreet’s lips could not frame the fatal command, but he bowed his head, and Pickett turned away and rode to the front of his division.

A quiver ran along the line. The watching Federals a mile away heard the cheering—the old-time Rebel yell—marked it rise and fall and die away. The ranks stood immobile. “Attention!” Another word of command. The guns crashed against the shoulders. “Forward!” The long grey line stepped as one man. There was no hurry, no crowding, no haste. They had both a stage and an audience, those men, for their grim play—the greatest of tragedies. They were determined to show to the largest assemblage of spectators ever gathered together on the continent to witness a drama of life and death, that they were as proficient in the niceties

of the soldier's art as they were striking exemplifications of its manhood and valour.

Taking direction from the guiding regiment, the men, their arms at a right shoulder, coolly dressed their lines upon the battle flags as if on parade. Some of those banners flapped broadly in the gentle breeze, others were mere shreds of colour from splintered staffs. They had been torn to pieces on many a battle field. In three long lines, each brigade forming one, Garnett in the lead, Armistead in the centre, Kemper bringing up the rear, the grey-clad men of Virginia softly descended the hill.

One hundred and twenty thousand pairs of eyes stared at them as they left their places in the line. They made a front about four hundred yards long. To the left of them were two divisions of supporting troops, mainly North Carolinians, with brigades of Tennesseans and Mississippians, and another Virginia brigade with two Alabama regiments under Pettigrew and Trimble. They had fought and suffered severely in the battles of the days before, but with spirit undaunted, emulous of the Virginians, they, too, dressed their lines and moved confidently toward the enemy. In rear of either flank of the long lines marched brigades in solid column. There was no ruffling of drums or blaring of bugles. Even the commands were given in an ordinary tone of voice, as if the occasion was quite an everyday affair. The pomp and circumstance of which the poet sings, on which the romancer dwells, were not in evidence. These men meant business. The only bits of colour, the only display, were in the fluttering battle flags. Each line of dusty men was capped with a hedge of steel. The sunlight sparkled from polished bayonet or was reflected from glittering blade. The shouts with which the order

to march had been greeted gave place to silence. Quickly, firmly, silently, the men pressed on.

Grafton's heart was beating like a drum. The excitement of the advance was getting into his blood. The stillness seemed appalling to him. He longed for the moment when the silence would be broken by the roar of a gun. His soul craved the instant when the common time would be quickened, when the march should become a run, when into the blue smoke, bayonet in hand, he could throw himself breast to breast with the enemy. Anything was better than this slow, deliberate approach.

He glanced down the line taking note of faces. Some were as white as death, others engorged with blood. Here and there a lip was drawn back over the teeth in an angry tiger-like snarl. Some faces wore grim smiles of pleasure. There was a forced gaiety about others. Some marched with frowning brows, dogged lines about firm, tense mouths. They went slowly down the hills, and the descent was easy, yet some already breathed heavily, panting as if after a hard run.

"God!" whispered a nervous recruit, "why in hell don't they begin?"

"Wait a bit, you'll get all you want," a veteran replied.

"And 'twill be hell, all right," whispered another as they stumbled over the uneven ground.

"Silence in the ranks!" cried an officer, closing the files. His voice was much as usual, but to Grafton it sounded shrill and high, as if a premonitory note of warning ran through it. Nothing had yet happened to cause any confusion, but the men instinctively began to crowd together a little—the natural craving for a human touch in emergency. The front wavered, curved in and out, was in danger of breaking.

“Back on the left, there!” said Grafton sharply from his position on the right, as his eye ran down his company front. “Open out and keep your dress. Let those Yankees see that we can march as well as fight. Easy, now; that’s better!” He was gratified to find that he could speak easily and naturally, and more gratified to see the men relax their pressure and line dress on the guide again.

So that devoted band went down the hill carrying the hopes of six millions of people, the focus of observation for every soldier on either side. Presently they had advanced far enough to uncover the crest they had just left. They could hear quick movements back there, the trampling of horses, the creaking of wheels, a sharp word of command. Guns were coming after them, a battery of light artillery hastily gathered together was following them. And the cannon on the ridge behind them were making ready. Hark, what was that! A roar from the rear of them, the scream of a shell through the air close above the advancing lines. The recruit ducked his head.

“That’s from our own guns, boy,” said the veteran composedly; “they are covering the advance. You needn’t fear that.”

“I don’t fear anything,” cried the recruit, his pale face flushing.

“Well, by G—, sonny, I wish I could say the same,” returned a nervous-looking man who always went into battle chockful of the most unpleasant emotions, which he promptly forgot when the actual fighting began.

“Wisht I was a woman or a baby,” exclaimed another, with a low laugh. His reputation for bravery was as high as any in the regiment.

“Why don’t the Yankees begin?” asked the re-

cruit, manfully trying to keep his teeth from chattering.

"Silence, there! Silence!"

The talking stopped instantly. Truth to tell, others than the newly enlisted were wondering why the enemy delayed opening on so fine a target as the long grey lines presented.

What was that?

"Here it comes!" cried one as a puff of smoke rose suddenly into the air from the crest of the other hill and was as quickly blown aside in a great white cloud. The report of the discharge came faintly to them. Then there was a nearer sound, a dull, horrible, sickening thud, the scream of a horse. The colonel of one of the regiments shot into the air and fell back with his horse, both killed by the solid shot. The men of the second brigade saw it all plainly. A shiver ran through the lines, yet there was relief in it, too. The Yankees had begun. Now it was real fighting. There was a mighty surge forward in answer to a common eager impulse.

"Steady, steady!" came warning voices from the rear of the lines.

The men clamped their jaws together and instinctively quickened their step. In another moment they would be out of hand on the run, and the time for that had not yet come.

"Back there, back there! Dress on the colours!" cried the sergeants. "Step, step!" they shouted in the old familiar way as if on a practice march.

Another roar came from the batteries in front as all the guns along the ridge gave tongue. They were firing solid shot and making great gaps in the lines now.

"Close up, men, close up the ranks! Dress on the colours! Steady, boys, steady!"

There was plenty of smoke blowing down that valley now. Enough to distort but not sufficient to obscure. There was no concealment possible, no way of escape, from that hail of iron sweeping the hills, nothing to do but go on, straight into the heart of that infernal cataclysm of destruction, to oppose frail human breasts to lead and steel. Suddenly the deep diapason of the cannonade was shattered by sharper sounds close at hand. These were shells.

A long gap, half a dozen files front, was suddenly ripped out of Grafton's company. The survivors reeled in closing the rent in the living line. New hands grasped the colours from a falling bearer. And still the great advance went on in a rain of blood and death.

But this could not last. Would they never come to grapple with their enemies? Yes, thank God! Before them rose a series of blue dots—skirmishers. There was a sudden popping, snapping, crackling of small arms, a sound different from the thunder of the cannonade. It seemed almost ridiculous in the greater tumult. Yet the sharp staccato was murderous. They were just beyond the Emmitsburg road. A word, a yell, a cheer, a charge, and the blue dots scampered up the hill. Not all of them, however, for many writhed on the grass or lay quite still, past all fighting forever. The grey line trampled over them relentlessly. Their eyes were fixed above at the flame-shot, smoke-covered crest. They saw nothing of what was under foot. There was some shelter across the road in the little ravine. Thank God for it! The line plunged for it, reached it, halted panting. They had come two-thirds of the way—come with a fearful loss, and the worst part was still before them. The line was rectified and

straightened out, the men closed in and made ready for a final dash.

It had been bad enough before, yet what had passed was as nothing to what was to come. The Confederate guns were in a continuous roar behind them. The air was rent and torn with screaming shell. Yet the Federal cannon fire had slackened, although now the rifles blazed a continuous death rattle from the entrenchments they were facing. They knew the reason for the sudden silence of the cannon; they knew that every smoking gun would be charged to the muzzle with the deadliest projectile then known to man, canister. That so soon as they appeared out of their last cover each gun would make of their bodies a target. What of that? That was to be expected. Battles are not won without death. O sunny Southland, for whose liberties we fight, we who are about to die salute you!

Belts were tightened, guns were looked to, impedimenta were thrown aside. Hands gripped tighter the flagstaves. The quick breath came more quickly, hearts beat faster. "Forward!" The hoarse words ran along their contracted lines. Like the dragon teeth of Cadmus' sowing those Virginians burst out of the earth and ran toward the Federal line, so near, yet so far away. With a tremendous roar every cannon, every rifle, every musket, opened upon the doomed men. A tornado of bullets swept down upon them. Nearly every horse ridden by a field officer was killed on the instant. Men fell and lay in long windrows as if cut by a gigantic scythe. It was such a battle storm as no human body ought to be asked to face, as no human body could be expected to endure.

But these men faced it and they endured it. The division off on the left bending before the storm had

obliqued away till it had lost touch with them, although it still advanced. A great gap was opened between them and the Virginians—a fatal breach since it exposed the flank of Pickett's men. Also the progress of the Carolinians had been a little slower than the Virginia advance. Garnett was down, his brigade, too, involuntarily inclined toward the left as rushes bend before a tempest. Bodies of troops from the left of the Union line swarmed forward, taking Garnett's brigade in reverse. Where, in God's name, were the supports? With a wild swerve the men in grey turned to the left, but in their avoidance of the death-dealing torrent they did not forget to go forward. To go forward, that was their end in life. Advance, always the advance.

The seconds were minutes, the minutes hours, and still that rapidly withering body of men climbed that fatal hill. Thousands on every ridge watched the great drama. The spectators shouted, screamed, prayed, laughed, cursed, while into the battle smoke the gods in grey and the gods in blue plunged madly for the final test. Hearts stopped beating. Would they make it?

Would they make it? The men on the hill now so near stone wall or rail fence answered. That was Armistead's great voice. What godlike power had he to make himself heard in that infernal clamour? The orders to form a column penetrated the brains of the soldiers as by some telepathic transmission. Instinctively they obeyed. There had been a constant concentration of the survivors upon the flags. Bearer after bearer had been shot down, but always willing hands had seized each banner. They were huddled together in front of the column. Garnett was gone. By Heaven, his brigade, too, was gone, melted away. A few stragglers fired into the faces of the men in

blue so close at hand and fell, making way for the second line. Into the reek and smoke and whirling mass of men Armistead burst with his heroes. A few feet intervened between him and a stone wall. There stood the Union guns—silent at last. The Virginians were shooting now, their hearts exulting to be within range. The blue line swerved. It was gone. "Forward, forward!" deliriously cried the officers.

The grey line advancing, the blue men retreating, had a glimpse of a figure on the stone wall, a sword in hand, his hat perched upon the point, his eyes aflame, an incarnation of war. A general officer on foot like a private. He was yelling like a demoniac. It was Armistead. Behind him the flags and a few, oh, God, a mere handful of men! The Union line was breaking, it was broken, it was gone! They were victorious!

One hundred men burst over a stone fence cheering madly. In front of them stood a gun; its gunners lay dead about it. One slight boyish figure, pale as death, his clothing red-marked and gory, held the lockstring. "Webb . . . I'll give them one more shot," they heard him cry, as Cushing discharged the piece and fell dead upon the gun trail. Armistead, too, is down. Marking the high tide of that charge he falls.

A few score men in the Union lines. Where were the rest? God Almighty, how long? Mercifully the issue was not delayed. Out of the smoke and dust of battle a blue-clad force hurled itself upon the remnant of the Virginians. A hail of musketry was poured upon them. Grafton felt something hit him once, twice, thrice. He was a dead man, yet he kept his feet and thrust savagely with his bayonet in the smoke. He felt it thud against something soft that gave way as he struck and struck. He shouted in



“It was Armistead. Behind him the flags and a few, oh, God, a mere handful of men!”

triumph, he would not die alone. He held on to the gunbutt, striving unavailingly to withdraw the bayonet from a falling figure. He heard voices all about him.

“Surrender! It’s all over! You’re beaten!”

“Never!” he cried, wrenching vainly at the gun. Then he threw up his arms.

“Virginia!” he muttered thickly, a strange weakness possessing him.

As he collapsed arms caught him. Some one recognised him. A voice he heard faintly as he lost consciousness cried:

“Great God, it’s Grafton!”

That was all.

CHAPTER IX

THE PROPHET'S WORD

OUT of the jaws of death, out of the mouth of hell, came reeling back those Virginians. All that was left of them, that is, for many were killed, more were helpless from ghastly wounds, and some had been captured. In rear now, as he had been in advance before, rode Pickett on his great black horse. By a miracle both had passed through the conflict unhurt. The general's handsome face was haggard and filled with despair. His eyes were bloodshot, his brow was furrowed, his hands were trembling. He had succeeded; yes, he had pierced, he had broken the Union lines. But his supports, where were they? The awful slaughter upon the slopes had not left him enough men to hold or use the advantage he had gained. There was nothing left but to go back down the hill. Stormed at by such a fire as cannot be imagined, all that was left of those dauntless regiments retreated in disorganised bodies over the slippery red ground up which they had so triumphantly advanced. Where, where, were the supporting lines? asked the general and his men with rage and bitterness? Why had not the whole corps advanced in the way of that forlorn hope? Why had not the whole army followed those three divisions?

Where were the Carolinians, the Tennesseans, the Alabamians, who had followed Pettigrew on the left; those other men of the South whose cause Virginia had espoused, to help whom she had so reluctantly left the Union? For whose safety she had poured

out her life blood upon her own fields, to save whom she had offered herself as a champion and had consented to make of her own smiling land a battle-scarred waste? Where were those men when the Virginians charged up Cemetery Ridge?

Alas, none could reproach nor blame them! In long rows they lay silent as in line. Here and there a writhing figure showed that life was not quite gone. No, no; the task had been too great for any of woman born. That the Virginians had all but succeeded, could not be explained on any hypothesis begot of experience anywhere. Such valour, such heroism, such soul as they had shown marked them as gods rather than men.

They were conscious not at all of that as they reeled down the hill. They only knew they had failed. It was no comfort to them that they had attempted the impossible. For the first time in their history these men had gone forth to conquer and had come back defeated. They envied those who remained on the hill, the dead men, the wounded men, who could not be driven outside the Union lines. Staggering back, sullenly stopping in little groups to fire at the crest where Armistead lay with his soldiers, they experienced, like that Spartan survivor of Thermopylæ, a feeling of shame that they were living to tell the story of their overthrow.

Yet their general himself, marvellously unscathed amid that carnage, was leading them back. Fain would he, too, have laid beside Garnett and Armistead on that high watermark of Confederate valour, on the crest of that heaven-kissed hill which the passions of men had turned into an inferno. There are times when to live and go back are the hardest duties of a soldier. It takes more heroism sometimes to retreat than to advance. It was so when Pickett led

back the poor remains of his shattered battalions. In the charge organisation had been necessarily lost. Regiments had been swept away. Companies had been decimated, brigades had been shattered, officers had been killed. The few of subordinate rank who survived ran to and fro among the group of men, toiling terribly, labouring like Titans to bring some sort of order out of chaos. The assault had ended in a dreadful confusion of intermingled men and guns, but the retreat was not a rout. Even in that hail of fire the men remembered that they were soldiers and seconded the pleas and orders of their officers as best they could. It was after all something like a battle line which toiled up Seminary Ridge to the place they had left an hour—one short hour—before: a torn, irregular, blood-stained, broken rank, but thank God, it was a fighting force still.

Most of the men were weeping, the tension being off. Well, they had shown themselves men, they had a right to cry like women. There were movements in hot haste along the Confederate lines. Batteries were advanced. Other troops were brought forward and stretched out in long, thin ranks to fill the places of the dead and missing, in anticipation of the return shock, the return charge. Men looked with bated breath at the blue lines upon the hill waiting each instant to see masses treading over the bodies of the slain lying so thick in the valley and advancing toward the shattered line in grey. How would they, how could they, meet it?

Galloping up on his great grey horse into that confusion burst a soldier alone. He neither checked steed nor drew rein until he was in the middle of the heaving, panting, sobbing, chaotic mass of retreating men.

“It’s my fault!” he cried in his deep, splendid

voice; "it's all my fault. I take the blame. You have done nobly. I want all true men now. Face the other way. Those people will soon be upon us. We must show them that we can defend as well as attack. Face the other way. There must be no further retreat. It's all my fault!"

They were breathing hard, those exhausted men. They had little strength for words, but as Robert Lee, with a face like iron, such a figure of repression as men had not often seen, but with his soul upon his lips, magnanimously assuming the burden of defeat, rode back through his faithful Virginians, they turned and cheered him like mad. Now the black horse meets the grey. There is a fierce outcry, a passionate protest from the commander who has seen the flower of his division go down to utter destruction. Why was he not supported? Where were the other men? Why was such a brilliant opportunity of success allowed to fail of fruition? Who was at fault?

"I, I alone am to blame," said the deep voice of the great captain, calming his excited subordinate. "You have done magnificently. Virginia is proud of you. No more now. The time for discussion is not yet. Let all brave men rally. We must be ready to fight. We must make secure our own lines."

So riding to and fro the heroic figure of the great captain brings order out of chaos and nerves his broken, sobbing men again to confront the foeman and hurl him back should he assail the line. The Army of the Potomac came not. Meade gave no order. Its opportunity and his were gone. Fate knocks but once on any man's door. Meade's chance did not present itself again. He lost his golden moment when he held his eager war hounds in leash. The Confederates waited throughout the long after-

noon, but there was no movement from the other hill. The last ditch is a great place in which to die. The men in grey were not dead, but they were against the wall. The leader of the men in blue had had enough. He did not wish to rouse the maddened lion from his final lair. Perhaps after all he decided wisely when he concluded that it was his strength to sit still.

And the sun sank to rest amid rising banks of lowering clouds that presently blotted out the stars. As night fell the floods came and the rains descended and beat upon that earth as if they would fain wash from its surface the red stains of quarrel. But not all the waters of the mighty deeps could erase from the records of men the story of that great charge made by those immortal Virginians.

A week later and a woman sat at the door of a room in the White House. Telegraph instruments clicked unceasingly in the large apartment in which she sat. Officers dashed in and out with despatches and orders. Grave and venerable Senators and statesmen came and went, with a sprinkling of the common people among them, while the woman sat there unheeded. She had been there since early morning. While the long hours had dragged away she had waited and waited. It was late in the afternoon before she received the opportunity to meet which she had come so far and to create which she had laboured and sorrowed. A negro messenger beckoned to her at last. He opened the door before her and she entered another room.

A tall man was writing at a desk near the window. He looked up as she came in, and then he rose slowly to his feet and stood in all his great height, in all his gaunt ugliness before her. It was to see this man that she had gone on her knees to the Confederate

authorities in Richmond; it was to see this man that she had begged and implored the Union troops guarding Washington to let her pass. Through an old friend of her grandfather's who was now representing Pennsylvania in the Federal Congress she had received permission from the President to call on him.

Now that she stood in his presence she was silent. She had never met a man quite like Abraham Lincoln. There was in his face and bearing none of the grace and refinement and distinction that might have been expected from the position he occupied. At first glance he seemed like a plain, homely, uncouth old man. Her thoughts were intensely personal, her own grief, her own anxiety, had brought her here. Yet she was not too engrossed to realise that this strange, somewhat forbidding, personality held the destinies of the land in his hand. Certainly of his own section of the country, and perhaps of hers, as well.

She had been ready of tongue, eloquent of speech before, but now she was almost paralysed. What if he should say her nay? She had had such hard work to get where she could proffer her final plea that her heart stood still in sudden terror at that fear. Behind that figure there was no appeal, back of Abraham Lincoln stood only God. Well, to Him at least again and again she had made fervent petition. He would help her now with this earthly potentate surely. Her lips formed another, a last request.

The President stepped nearer to her. Ariadne was taller than she had been; indeed among women she was no longer small, and she was beautiful. The roughest man, the rudest heart, the most engrossed being is not insensible to that supreme power with which woman in her weakness is so fitly panoplied. There is beauty and beauty. Ariadne's was the

beauty of sweetness and light, the beauty that pleases, that enchants and enthralls, not so much by the sudden shock of its splendour as by its subtle, tender femininity that appeals to the strong. Hers was the beauty that fascinates but does not dazzle.

An exquisite figure of grace and charm, she lifted her brown eyes toward the man who approached her slowly. An observer might have thought of the nursery fable of Beauty and the Beast, save that there was nothing of the Beast about the President except his plain ugliness.

"My child," he said, in his deep resonant voice, and with the first word his face took upon itself another aspect to her appealing vision—how had she thought him so plain of feature?—"what do you wish?"

"I . . . I . . . I am . . ."

The President lifted a note.

"Mrs. Philip Grafton," he said, kindly helping her out. "Congressman Crossman says he knew your grandfather, Senator Lewis, in the old days before all this unhappiness came upon us."

"Yes, sir . . . and . . . and . . . he . . ."

"I, too, remember to have met him," continued the President, perceiving her agitation and hoping to calm her, also to reassure her, by his words; "I was in Congress with him, and I remember with what interest and reverence I looked up to the man whose name had been great in my ears since I first began to take notice."

"Thank you, sir. Grandfather was a great man, and with his dying breath he called down blessings on the United States."

"More than ever in her history does she need the prayers of the righteous now," said the President softly.

"But my grandfather was a true son of Virginia, sir," cried Ariadne quickly, fearful lest she should have given a false impression and thus disgraced her race.

"He might be that and a righteous man still," said the President, "might he not?" There was a little twinkle in his eye.

"He could not be other than righteous if he was true to the South, sir," returned the girl jealously.

"That is a question about which there is a difference of opinion," remarked the great man quaintly, "and I opine that it will not be settled for some time to come yet. But you didn't seek me to talk politics or principles, I am sure. You come from Richmond?"

"Yes, sir.

"For what purpose?"

"I wish you to let me seek my husband."

"Your husband? Is he a prisoner?"

"I . . . I do not know," faltered poor Ariadne, her lips trembling.

She would not cry, she would not break down before this man, the enemy of her country, she said, but nevertheless two great tears swam in her eyes and slowly trickled down her cheeks.

"Explain yourself, pray," said Lincoln.

"He was a . . . sergeant in the Ninth Virginia Infantry, sir, in General Armistead's brigade of General Pickett's division."

"Ah!" replied the President, comprehending all.

"And he charged up that hill with the rest and . . . and . . . never came back."

Lincoln shook his head softly.

"There were many who did not come back."

"He wasn't killed? You haven't heard . . ."

"I have heard nothing of him, my dear child," answered the President, laying his hand gently on her shoulder.

"Oh!" she said, clasping her breast, "I thought . . ."

"And some of those," continued the President, "who did not come back are in our hands to-day. It may be . . ."

"It must be that he is alive, sir. He was to come to claim me after the war . . . when we had won . . . I was only a child when we were married . . . oh, my God, my God, I cannot give him up!"

"Sit down, my dear lady," said the President kindly, as if he had been her father, "and tell me all about it."

"When my grandfather died," began Ariadne, something in this strange man compelling her obedience, "Philip . . . Mr. Grafton . . . Sergeant Grafton, you know . . . he married me. I was only sixteen then, and Vallewis, our place, was gone and I had nothing. And Philip married me and left me in Richmond to wait for him until the war was over."

"How old are you now?"

"Eighteen, sir. And I have tried so hard to be worthy of him! I have worked for our soldiers, I have studied, I have written him every day, and after every battle he has always sent me word. The news came, I heard from Gettysburg. One of the men of his regiment was sent to Richmond. He told me that he saw Philip last on the top of the hill. He did not . . . he could not tell whether he was . . . alive . . . or not, and I have come to you . . ."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"To find him."

"And if he is wounded?"

“To let me go to him. If he is a prisoner, to let me share his prison.”

“My child,” said the President, “I will find him. If he is a prisoner, you cannot see him, of course. If he is wounded, you may go to him, if possible.”

“When may I have the news, sir?”

“To-morrow. Where are you to be found?”

“At Judge Crossman’s.”

“So he is giving aid and comfort to the enemy, is he?” said the President, smiling.

Ariadne knew not what to say.

“Well, I can forgive him since I am doing practically the same thing myself. I hope to tell you to-morrow that your husband is well. And now I bid you good-bye.”

“Sir,” said Ariadne, rising and taking the President’s great hand in both her own, “I . . . we have hated you in the South. But one woman will ever remember and pray God to have you in His keeping.”

Before he could prevent she had bent and kissed his hand.

“As for me,” said the President quietly, “I love the South as I love the North and the East and the West. I would fain have it back in the old Union, under the old flag.”

He stretched out his hand as he spoke, forgetful for the moment of the woman who stood before him. Ariadne knew her Bible thoroughly. As she stared up into that plain face, transfigured, glorified, the words of an ancient and unfulfilled appeal that was as much prophecy as prayer ran through her mind:

“O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

CHAPTER X

THE AFTERMATH OF PAIN

THE condition of the wounded at Gettysburg was terrible. The suffering after the battle is always tremendously greater than the suffering during the course. The spiritual exaltation, the mental exhilaration of combat are similar in effect to surgical shock after an operation, or that paralysis of the nervous system which follows immediately upon a severe wound. All these produce an insensibility to pain: but as shock, or exaltation or nervous paralysis is dissipated, pitiful weakness, anguish, sharp and keen, overwhelming mental depression, complete and prostrating reactions, manifest themselves.

When an army is far from its base of supplies and has to make long marches, especially in retreat, before it gets its men to places where they can receive proper treatment, the horrors of war are sickening, indescribable. That economy of men which the paucity of resources in the Southern Confederacy made necessary, compelled the retreating army of Northern Virginia to take with it in its ambulances, baggage wagons and such vehicles as could be secured in the neighbourhood, every man who could possibly stand the journey.

Some of them had received no treatment at all; others had been attended to in the most perfunctory manner. This was not due to heartlessness or neglect, but to the fact that all the surgeons, working night and day without rest or sleep, were unequal to the constant demands imposed upon them. No army,

could by any possibility carry enough surgeons to treat all its wounded effectively at once.

Of course, there were numbers of Confederate soldiers who could not be moved, who had to be left on the field to the care of their Northern foemen, and these were, comparatively speaking, fortunate. Thus the work imposed upon the Northern medical department was vastly greater than that upon the Southern. To have had merely their own wounded to deal with would have been bad enough, but when to them were added those of the Confederates—every one of them in desperate case, since all who could be moved had been taken away—the task was appalling.

Fortunate it was for Philip that he had fallen into the hands of friends. The voice that he had heard as he fell was that of Major Burt Kirkwood, who had commanded a battalion of troops which had delivered the *coup de grace* that repulsed Pickett's grand assault. While the lines were being re-formed, by Kirkwood's directions Grafton was taken to the road and laid beneath a shady tree in a place where he was sheltered at least in part from the Confederate shells, which had already begun to rain upon that shot-torn hill. So soon as other duties permitted them, Kirkwood, bringing Manning, who commanded one of Webb's regiments, came back to where their old classmate lay. With them was a regimental surgeon.

A hasty examination of the unconscious figure revealed the fact that Grafton was shot through the left arm, through the right groin and through the right shoulder, and had received a terrible smash over the head. He had lost a great deal of blood and lay like one dead. He had not spoken or given a sign of consciousness since he had been struck down.

The surgeon looked him over skilfully, if quickly, and pronounced his case practically hopeless.

"He's got about one chance in a thousand," he said, "and that but a slim one. If he is left out here he will die to-night—it's certain to rain. I doubt if we could save him in a hospital. He wants quiet somewhere, and nursing."

After probing the wounds and leaving instructions as to bandaging and dressings, which the two soldiers followed out with clumsy fingers, but with hearts as tender as women, the harassed and overworked physician hurried away in response to many appeals upon him.

"By heavens!" said Manning, "it's too bad. We can't leave old Phil here to die in this way."

"We must send him to Kathleen," said Kirkwood; "she was always fond of him, you know. If we could get him to York perhaps she could pull him through."

"I can't help thinking of that graduation up at Harvard," said Manning, "it doesn't seem as if it were only two years ago, does it?"

"No; here, help me with this bandage. You know that he and Kathleen had some words that day about his going South."

"Yes, I knew it," answered Manning; "she told me all about it. You know once I used to think she was too fond of Grafton here, but they had a real quarrel before he left."

"That will make no difference with Kathleen, now," returned her brother quickly.

"Of course not," assented Manning heartily; "she will do everything for him that she would do for either of us. The question is, how to get him to her."

"I'm going over to see General Gibbon pres-

ently," said Kirkwood. "They've got to get these wounded out of here in some way, and some of them will go to York. There is a big hospital there and . . ."

"Hurry up, then!" said Manning. "I'll wait here with Phil."

As Kirkwood rode away Manning knelt down by the side of his old friend and classmate.

"Phil," he murmured, "I was frightfully jealous of you once. I hated you so that I would have been almost willing to kill you myself. But now, by Heaven, I'd almost give my life to hear your voice again," so his thoughts ran. "What fools we are any way! There ought to be some better way to settle such differences as lie between the North and the South than by fighting about them. Yet, when I'm actually in the fight I don't think of anything but hitting the other fellow."

He observed that an involuntary movement of the wounded man's arm had slightly disarranged a bandage. He had applied the bandages on the arm and leg while Kirkwood had attended to the shoulder and head. He bent over him to adjust the dressing. A little gold chain hung around the neck of the wounded man. From it a locket depended. In some way it had opened. As Manning bent over Grafton to close it the pictured face within caught his eye in a flash. He recognised the portrait of a woman.

"What!" he exclaimed, his heart full of bitter wrath and sudden jealousy, "what is that Rebel soldier doing with that picture?"

All the anger and uncertainty which had once threatened to impair their friendship flamed up again. He had not meant to look, merely to close the locket. It had happened by chance, but having

happened he could not put the recognition out of his mind. Resisting a temptation to tear it from the other man's neck, he reached his hand down and closed the locket, and then turned to find Kirkwood by his side once more.

"I met Generals Webb and Gibbon over at General Meade's headquarters," said Kirkwood briefly, "and found out that Dr. Letterman—the surgeon-in-chief of the Army of the Potomac—is going to start a trainload of wounded for York to-night. He says we can get Grafton on it if we hurry."

"Do you know, Kirkwood," began Manning uncertainly, "I don't . . . believe . . . that Kathleen is the person to . . ."

"What do you mean?"

"I think we'd better . . ."

"George Manning," said Kirkwood sternly, "are you letting that old foolish feeling get the mastery of you?"

"Burt, he's got her picture in a locket around his neck."

"Did you open it?"

"What do you take me for?" blurted out Manning fiercely; "do you think I would examine a gentleman's private belongings and Grafton helpless! It was lying open on his breast. I started to close it. I couldn't help seeing it."

"Manning, forgive me," said Kirkwood; "I ought to have known, of course. Now you must be magnanimous. He's as good as dead already. We simply have to save him, if we can. We must give him every chance, and you must trust Kathleen."

"What is he carrying her picture around his neck for, I'd like to know!"

"I suppose . . . well, yes, I might as well admit it. He did love her once and probably he has never

taken the thing off. Besides, she is not responsible for his action."

"But Kathleen swore to me that there was nothing between them!"

"No more there was," said Kirkwood gravely. "If you need my assurance to add to hers, I declare that she told you the truth. Come, George, you can't afford to be jealous of a dying man."

"No," said Manning, "but it is hard to stand quietly and . . ."

"I know it is, but . . . well . . . we are soldiers, and perhaps we'll have to stand stranger things than that. At any rate, unless he is to die right here we must get him on that train. I won't do it without your consent."

"And do you think I would refuse?" said Manning quickly. "I wouldn't put such a slight on Kathleen." He shut his lips firmly.

"Very well, then; send him up."

"I wish I could go, too," said Manning, almost envious of Grafton.

"Can't you get leave for a few days, George?"

"It's not to be thought of, Burt. I wouldn't ask for it. I wouldn't take it. I wouldn't leave my men now. Besides, we may be ordered to attack the Rebs any minute."

"No; from what I heard at headquarters, I think not. I guess they think this army has done enough. By George, it has! I never saw anything come on like those fellows."

"Wasn't it glorious? I just felt like cheering them as I saw them breast that hill in the thick of our fire."

"It seemed cruel for us to shoot down that little huddle in the smoke that got over the wall after Webb's brigade gave back," said Kirkwood.

“Oh, yes,” said Manning, “but if we hadn’t shot down that little huddle, God help us! There’s only one way to stop those fellows, and that’s to kill them.”

“Isn’t it strange,” mused Kirkwood, “that one minute after we have been doing our level best to kill them we are straining every nerve to save their lives, as Phil’s here?”

“Yes, and the strain of it in this case is indeed terrible,” commented Manning, with a gloomy look.

“I know, I know, George,” said Kirkwood, with kindly sympathy; “but Kathleen will honour you for this when she hears.”

“I hope so,” returned the other.

“Here come some stretcher-bearers from my regiment,” continued Kirkwood. “By the way, I think you had better write a note to Kathleen to let her know we’re all right and to beg her to do the best she can for Grafton. I shall drop her a line, too.”

“She will not need urging to do that,” said Manning bitterly, taking out his notebook and pencil and beginning to write.

“We’re ordered to report to you, sir,” said the corporal who with a detail of eight men for carrying the stretcher stopped at the side of the little group.

“Very good, Corporal,” said his major, “you are to take this Reb—this soldier here—to an ambulance which you will find at General Meade’s headquarters. Here’s an order from Dr. Letterman for the ambulance and a further order that this soldier, Sergeant Philip Grafton, one of those Virginians who charged up that hill, is to go on the first train to York this evening. After you have put him in the ambulance the men will rejoin the regiment. You will

go on to York with him—here are your orders—and you are not to turn this soldier over to the hospital, but will take him to this address and urge that he be taken in there. Having delivered him there you will also deliver two notes which I will hand you in a few minutes. You will then get whatever answer is given you and rejoin us immediately. I think it is hardly likely that we shall move for a day or two, but wherever we are you will find us. Here,” continued Kirkwood, handing out two or three gold pieces, “is what you will require for your journey.”

“Yes, sir,” said the orderly, a young man from Kirkwood’s own town, who was thoroughly to be depended upon.

Meanwhile the stretcher-bearers were busy putting the senseless form upon the litter.

“Begob!” said one of them, a big Irishman, “it’s a dale of throuble the Meejor do be takin’ fer a man phwats only a sargint.”

Kirkwood looked up from the note he was writing and spoke sharply.

“Hennessey, it’s because men like that one are only sergeants in the Rebel army that the rank and file fight the way they do. It was men like that one that charged up that hill to-day in the face of our guns.”

“Yis, sor, av the Meejor plazes, sor.”

“He was once a classmate of mine at Harvard, and I suppose before this war he was worth one or two hundred thousand dollars.”

“Begob!” said Hennessey the abashed, for the sum named was wealth in those days, “if thot’s wot they make sargints out of in the Ribil Ar-r-my, wot must the offycers be?”

“Ready, now, sir,” said the corporal as the

bearers lifted the stretcher from the ground. Kirkwood and Manning had each torn a leaf from his memorandum book and scribbled a few hasty words thereon. The notes were folded and handed to the corporal, who saluted and marched away. Men learned to be sharp and brief in times like that. Nothing was wasted, no, not even human life, cheapest of things in wars. Lives were expended but for a purpose. The best general was he who spent them for the best results and with the most economy.

It was well for Grafton that he remained insensible during that awful journey. Others were not so fortunate as he. He was laid in an ambulance which was not reserved for him alone. There were too many wounded to be carried, and too few vehicles in which to carry them, for any one man, unless he were a general officer, to take that journey alone. The mules attached were like all army mules, not gentle, but irritable and fractious. The way was broken, the roads terribly rough. Part of the time they had to drive across the country to reach the station at Gettysburg.

The driver was careful enough; he did the best he could, but he had hauled similar cargoes so often that he was more or less callous about it, or at least indifferent to the shrieks, the yells, the curses and groans and cries that came from the men behind him.

“ Oh, God, why can't I die ! ”

“ Jesus, Jesus, will no one kill me ? ”

“ Oh, mother, mother ! ”

“ Have mercy on me and for Christ's sake put me out of my misery ! ”

“ Water, water, for the love of heaven ! ”

“ Stop, stop, just a minute ! Put me out and let me die on the roadside ! ”

“Give me a drink!”

“I am dying, driver. I can't stand this any more. There's a load in my pistol. Won't you end it for me?”

“I am dying! My poor wife, my little children! What will become of them?”

It was well for the drivers that they were hardened to such appeals as these, for they would have broken the hearts of men whose sensibilities had not been dulled by the iteration of frequent usage. But all journeys have an end, even the journeys of those who go down to the River which all must inevitably cross, and as night fell the town was reached. The train, a long array of freight cars, some of which had been used to carry cattle to supply the army, and which had only been cleaned in the most hasty and perfunctory manner, was filled with wounded, and slowly clanked out of the station.

The faithful corporal, by dint of his pass, signed by Dr. Letterman, and his orders, upon which Kirkwood had induced Meade himself to write his name, went in the car with Grafton. He was assiduous in his care for the wounded Confederate, but there was little he could do save to bathe his brow and moisten his lips and keep the bandages wetted; for Grafton had not yet regained consciousness. When the train drew in to York the next day the townspeople, who had been apprised of its coming, were down at the station with every available vehicle.

A few days before the battle a division of the Confederate army had marched through that town. The men had conducted themselves like gentlemen. They had burned no barns, had not pillaged any houses, had not insulted any woman. General Gordon, who led them, had indeed made a favourable impression upon many citizens of the place, and the

people were grateful. Naturally they preferred to care for their own wounded, but the Confederate soldiers who were intermingled with their Northern foemen were received with little less cordiality and treated with the same kindness as the men in blue.

The corporal was familiar with the person of the lady whom he was seeking, and he easily found her among the hundreds of others who had gathered at the station. Forcing his way through the crowd he saluted her and handed her two notes.

"Major Kirkwood?" she asked, recognising that he belonged to her brother's regiment.

"Well, ma'am."

"And Colonel Manning?"

"Just the same. These letters are from them. I've got a wounded soldier here which they ask you to take care of," continued the corporal as Kathleen hastily opened one of the notes, glanced over it and pressed it to her lips with a look of relief upon her face. The other she did not look at then.

"One from either of the regiments?" she asked, alluding to the fact that both men for whom she had inquired had command of their regiments that day.

"No, ma'am. It's a Rebel soldier. They were very particular ordering me to ask you to take him in."

"Certainly, certainly; where is he?"

"He's in that car yonder, and I'm trying to get an ambulance."

"I have a spring wagon here with a mattress and blankets in it. I knew there would be need for such things. Two of the farm hands are here, too. I will send them to you at once. Come with me and they will go with you and bring him out here. Is he badly wounded?"

"I guess he's about done for, ma'am. I heard the Major say that he'd about one chance in a thousand for his life, and he thought you could give it to him by nursing."

"What is his name?" cried Kathleen suddenly. The interest the two men with whom she was most intimately associated had taken in this Confederate soldier had awakened a sudden heartbreaking suspicion in her mind.

"It's in Colonel Manning's letter, ma'am"—it was Manning's letter that she had not opened, and with rare consideration her brother had let his friend tell the story and give direction. "His name is Grafton," continued the corporal; "he's a sergeant in—Are you ill, ma'am?" asked the soldier, catching the woman by the arm. She had gone suddenly white and reeled and would have fallen but for him.

"Oh, no," she said, summoning her courage and struggling to control herself; "he is not dead, you say?"

"Not yet, ma'am, but . . ."

"Hurry, hurry!"

The corporal ventured upon a question as they pushed through the outskirts of the crowd.

"Beg pardon, ma'am, but do you know him?"

"Know him? I . . . I . . ." she checked herself in time. "Yes, he was a classmate of my brother's at Harvard."

The horses were a nervous pair, and the crowd, the confusion, the tumult, were fretting them terribly. The man who drove them could scarcely manage them, but Kathleen would not hear of his remaining.

"I can hold them," she said; "go with the corporal, both of you, and bring Mr. Grafton here immediately. Quick, as you value his life . . . and

mine," she added under her breath as the two men turned away with the soldier.

With the assistance of some of the bystanders and an improvised stretcher Grafton was carried from the car and placed in the wagon, Kathleen, with wonderful vigour and strength, directing all. She could give way to her emotions later; now there was work to do. He must be saved, and she would save him. Half an hour later Grafton was laid on a clean bed in a great cool chamber, the windows of which were shaded by ancient chestnuts that were full-grown trees when William Penn had purchased the territory from the Indians for a trifle. A doctor had been summoned imperiously by Kathleen. The wounds had been probed, the bullets extracted, the dressings renewed, proper medicine prepared and everything that medical skill could suggest had been done. The rest was with Kathleen.

Thus he had come back to her. She had heard no word from him or about him since that day they had parted with bitter words on the porch. She had striven, and with more or less success, to put him out of her heart, and out of her mind as well, yet she knew now that her attempt had been a failure. She bent over him in an agony of soul. He could not die, he must not die! At least not until she told him that she had not meant it all. That in spite of what she had said she still loved him—and Kathleen had no right to love him, nor had he a right to love her, had he but known it. Yet there are passions before which conventions snap like threads. That in the woman's heart was of such a character. There was nothing in Grafton's almost pulseless heart but a great blackness. What would there be when he awakened?

The doctor had said that he could do no more,

that it was simply a case of care. He would come every day, and, if fever did not kill his patient in the meantime and if the wounds did not refuse to heal, he might pull him through. Kathleen determined that if it were in the power of woman to supplement the skill of man and to move the will of God, she would not be found lacking.

CHAPTER XI

THE SEARCH AMONG THE SLAIN

ARIADNE spent the afternoon and night and the next morning in a state of anxiety unspeakable, which her kind hosts could not relieve. About midday a messenger handed in at the front door an envelope addressed to her in a strange and peculiar handwriting. In one corner of it were printed the words "EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, D. C." She tore it open with trembling fingers and read it with much the sensations that a man would examine a paper which might prove either a death warrant or a reprieve. It ran:

"MY DEAR MRS. GRAFTON:

"Sergeant Philip Grafton of Pickett's division was left wounded on Cemetery Hill. Colonels Kirkwood and Manning, who were in command of regiments that finally repulsed the charge, had him sent from the field with the first train of wounded, which was unloaded at York, Pennsylvania. He was unconscious and desperately hurt, but alive. If he is still alive—and I pray God he may be!—he will be in one of the hospitals in York.

"I have secured a pass for you to go to York from Secretary Stanton, which I enclose. A special train bearing medical supplies for the wounded at York and Carlisle and elsewhere leaves the station this afternoon. Here is a permit to allow you to go on that train. I hope you may find your husband on the

road to recovery, and I know that he will be the better for your coming. I am glad to be able to do this for you.

“Your sincere friend and well-wisher,
“ABRAHAM LINCOLN.”

The pass and the permit would perhaps have been enough to have carried Ariadne safely to York, but the kind letter of the President, which he had taken the trouble to write himself, served amazingly. The officers in charge of the trainload of supplies for the sick had nothing but sympathy and respect for the beautiful young woman who was seeking her husband. There were other women on that train, Northern women, who were bound upon similar errands. The one touch of nature brought by a common grief, and a common hope, made them all friends. Ariadne found herself listening to the confidences of a grey old woman from Indiana, who was coming to seek her son, who had had a leg shot off at Gettysburg. A heart-broken young wife from New York, just able to rise from a sickbed, leaving a new-born infant for others to care for, was hurrying to the side of her husband, who had been shot through the lungs and who could not survive the wound. A sad-faced woman from New Jersey, shrouded in black, was going to get the body of her father. Each passenger was upon some such soul-tearing errand.

The little Confederate had thought she would be alone amid such an assemblage, but when they learned her story they opened their hearts to her and took her in. The slow freight train reached York quite early in the morning. There were no conveniences for sleeping on that train, but Ariadne could not have closed her eyes if she had enjoyed

every luxury of travel. She did not know when she had slept, indeed. Of course, she had—human nature, even under the most spiritual impulse, cannot long be sustained without rest. To sleep, to eat, to drink—these are necessary—though to-day the heart break and to-morrow we die. It was not a counsel of mere materialism that the apostle addressed to those that grieved—unless they ate and drank they could not mourn.

Ariadne was too wise a girl to waste her strength where she could avoid it. That regimen that she had set before herself to make herself worthy of her husband she would not abandon, now, at least until she had satisfied herself that Philip no longer lived. He was certainly desperately wounded; perhaps he was dead. If he were alive he would need care and nursing. She must keep her strength for him. To sleep, that was impossible, but she could, and did, force down her reluctant throat the good food provided by the kind officers of the train, who were sorry for her and for all the wretched women.

The bright sunlight of the clear morning dazzled her as she stepped out on the platform. With the selfishness of grief—and they were to be pardoned in their anxiety—most of the women hurried away under the escort of waiting friends or others to whom they could properly appeal; but poor Ariadne was a Rebel—an alien from the South. Not until she spoke would any one realise this fact from her betraying speech, but she felt it herself. She was a stranger in a strange land, and knew not where to turn until she came upon Mrs. Gray, the woman who had come to claim the body of her dead father. She had hesitated and turned back to the forlorn, tired, dusty figure of her sister of the South.

“I am in no hurry,” she said mournfully; “mo-

ments are nothing to me now. My errand can wait. Can I help you? Where was your husband taken?"

"I do not know. Your President said that he was brought here."

"The President!" exclaimed the woman.

"Yes, I have his letter."

"Have you a letter from President Lincoln? You, a Southern woman!" asked the other.

"Yes," answered Ariadne, taking it from her bosom, where she guarded it jealously as her most precious possession, the open sesame out of all her difficulties; "here it is."

Mrs. Gray scanned it hastily. She was a woman of decision. Her father had been colonel of a regiment temporarily commanding a brigade when he had been mortally wounded. An ambulance stood near the station. She called the driver to her with an imperious gesture.

"This lady," she said, "is looking for her husband."

"There's many a woman on the same errand, ma'am," returned the man not unkindly.

"He was a Reb . . . a Confederate soldier."

"There's a mort of 'em in town, ma'am."

"I know," said Mrs. Gray, "and I want you to tell us how to find him."

"I'm sorry I can't help you, ma'am."

"Can't you take us in your wagon to the different hospitals?"

"I can't do it, ma'am. I'm waitin' here for Colonel Townley. He's got command of the troops hereabouts."

"Where is he?"

"In the station arrangin' for some special trains, or . . ."

"Come with me," said Mrs. Gray to Ariadne.

They met Colonel Townley just leaving the agent's office.

"Sir," said Mrs. Gray, "this lady is a Southern woman. She is seeking her husband, Mr. Grafton, who was brought here wounded from Gettysburg."

"What hospital is he in, madam?" asked the colonel politely.

"We do not know. We thought perhaps you could tell us."

"I'm very sorry I can't. Everything is in such confusion. We are so swamped with wounded men who require attention that we have but little time for reports. If your friend will find quarters somewhere and will give me her address, I will . . ."

"Sir," cried Ariadne, "my husband is dying or dead. I can't wait! I must see him now. The President told me . . ."

"What President?"

"Your President."

"Show him the letter," said Mrs. Gray, and again Ariadne brought it forth.

"I will do what I can for you," said the colonel, stepping out on the platform after he had read it. "Orderly, take these ladies in my ambulance to every hospital in the town. Present my compliments to the surgeons in charge and ask them if they have a patient named . . . what name did you say, madam?"

"Sergeant Philip Grafton."

"A Reb . . . a Confederate soldier named Grafton, in their wards."

"Thank you, sir, and may God bless you!" cried Ariadne, turning away.

"And what may I do for you, madam?" asked the colonel, turning to the other woman.

"If you will let me have an ambulance later on to

bring back the body of my father to the station, that will be all," returned Mrs. Gray, biting her lip to keep back the tears.

"Who was your father, may I ask?"

"Colonel Morris of the Seventy-first New Jersey."

"You shall have it," said Colonel Townley, reaching his hand to her in warm sympathy. "I knew Colonel Morris very well. He died for his country like a hero, and you have my sincere sympathy."

And from the Northern lips there was given to the gallant officer the same simple prayer that had fallen from those of her Southern sister—"God bless you, sir." That was all.

"But, Colonel," protested the orderly respectfully, "what are you going to do, sir? How are you going to get up to camp?"

He pointed to the tents on the hills several miles away as he spoke.

"I will walk," said the colonel simply; "you attend to the ladies."

The body of Colonel Morris had been removed with other dead to the building set apart for the purpose, and, as it was nearest the station, there Ariadne parted from her new friend.

All that morning the girl drove with the soldier from one hospital to another. She made inquiry every place for her husband. She was met everywhere by the statement that nothing whatever was known of him. Everywhere she was invited into the wards to look among the patients, who had been unable to give an account of themselves, to see if one of the unknown might be he whom she sought. Such an ordeal for a woman had not come to many of her sex.

To walk through long lines of unconscious, silent, deathlike figures; to pass by cot after cot where delir-

ious men raved of home and mother, or of the fighting on the high places of the field; to have one's ears assailed by moans, curses, groans, cries, and sometimes and most horrible of all, by wild bursts of laughter; to look and look and look in face after face; to bend over figure after figure, with fear and hope both tugging at the heart; and to find—nothing! No sign! To have come so far on an errand of such moment and have it proved a fruitless quest in the end. Yet the President could not have been mistaken; he must be there! If she could only find him! Finally she left the last hospital.

“Are you sure there are no more?” she asked the soldier, as she climbed wearily into the ambulance.

“There . . . there is the dead house,” faltered the man, his rough voice softening. He had become nearly as much interested in the search as this gentle, uncomplaining, tireless, grief-stricken woman by his side.

“Oh, my God!” whispered Ariadne, “not there, not there!”

“What shall we do next, then?” asked the driver.

“I suppose we'd better try there,” answered the poor young wife, filled with leaden despairs. All arrangements had been completed for sending away the body of Colonel Morris, and Mrs. Gray had come back to that point to look after the shipment of some other of the officers and men of her father's regiment, else she would have been gone long since. She caught the fainting figure of the Southern girl in her arms.

“Have you found him, my dear?”

“No; I have been everywhere. I have looked in every hospital and at hundreds of poor men. He was not there.”

“And did you think to find him here?”

"I do not know; I cannot think at all. I only know that I must go on until I find him."

A medical officer had been detailed to attend to the forwarding of the bodies of the dead. He had kept the records, so far as they could be compiled, of those who had passed through his hands. With a desperate resolution Ariadne waited while Mrs. Gray explained her errand. No, there was no Grafton on the list. "Thank God for that!" she breathed. There had been many unknown dead, however, but there was no means of identifying them. One of them might have been he.

"There are some unknown dead here, now," continued the surgeon. "Would you like to look at them, ma'am?"

"I must," said poor Ariadne.

Was it harder or easier to gaze upon those whose sufferings were over than upon those who still lingered in the hospitals? The majesty of death was upon those faces. Sometimes the anguish that had gone before had left its imprint, but generally they were peaceful. Each one of them represented not merely a life quenched, but some woman's heart broken. Ariadne was not too selfish to say a prayer for those loved ones far away. She could understand what they must feel. No, he was not there. What should she do?

"Did you try the private houses in the town, ma'am?" asked the officer. "A great many soldiers were taken there. Mostly Union soldiers, but perhaps your husband might have been among them."

It was a forlorn hope. The houses were so many and it was afternoon now. Ariadne was faint, weary, heartbroken. Probably if it had not been for the other woman, she would have walked on a little space and then have fallen and perhaps died if no-

body had picked her up. But Mrs. Gray found some relief for her own grief in comforting her Southern sister. She took her to the crowded hotel. She managed to find a quiet corner where she persuaded her to eat and drink and afterward to take a little rest. Then with a heart-pang which it would seem so short an acquaintance could never develop, Ariadne bade the kind woman farewell and started out once more on her search. She walked down the main street and stopped before the first house she came to.

"Have you any wounded soldiers here? Is one of them named Grafton . . . a Confederate?" she asked of the woman who opened the door.

It was a question she put many times that long afternoon. Once in a while she met with a rebuff, but generally she was received with kindness. She was often asked to come in, and rest and partake of refreshment. But always she refused, and plodded up and down, street after street, knocking at door after door, until her weary limbs could scarcely drag her along.

If Philip could ever know of this he would be proud of her, she felt, if never before. Oh, if Philip only knew! Would Philip ever know anything? Was he alive? She could not find him. Late in the evening she turned a corner and sank down on the sidewalk. She could go no further. Her head fell forward on her knees. She was completely and utterly exhausted. She had expended the last vestige of her strength and energy. Human nature could not be driven further even by so imperative a thing as her heart. One or two passers-by stared at her curiously. But no one spoke to her and she did not look up. She was dying, she thought, and she prayed it might be quickly. If Philip were dead death would be a meeting. Presently a shuffling barefoot pattered

softly upon the sidewalk. A man stopped by her side. She heard a voice in her ear, a familiar voice, exclaiming:

"Gawd a'mighty, who dat?"

A hand was laid upon her shoulder. She looked up.

"Please, ma'am . . ." Then there was a sudden cry. "Hit's Miss 'Adny, Miss 'Adny, bless de Lord! Oh, Miss 'Adny, Miss 'Adny!"

In wild excitement the girl sprang to her feet, finding a sudden renewal of vigour from what source she could not tell. There on his knees before her, clutching her dress, kissing her hands, sobbing, crying, was Jeff! Not the sleek, prosperous, well-fed young black of the plantation days, but Jeff, thin, dirty, hungry, barefoot, ragged! Jeff, who had been with Philip! He would know!

"Jeff," cried the girl, "tell me, where is Mr. Grafton?"

"Oh, Miss 'Adny, I'se so glad ter see you. I des ben a-prayin' fer de sight of you . . ."

"Tell me, tell me!"

"He's up yander, Miss 'Adny, in dat ar big house on de hill. Dey put him in dar; dey wouldn't lef me stay wid him. Dey druv me off. When Marse Phil cha'ge up dat hill at dem Yankees an' he didn't come back no mo', I didn't wait fer ter git back wid Marse Rob't. I des tek to de mount'ns an' I reckoned dey mought be er fotchin' him heah, an' I fin' out dat Marse Phil is brung to dat big house, an' . . ."

"Is he dead?"

"No, but I spec' he moughty nigh it. He's des a-pinin' and a-pinin' fer you."

"Show me the way!" cried Ariadne, the fatigues of the past dropping from her like a cast-off garment.

In a few moments she followed the ragged negro through a large yard shaded with great chestnut trees. Her hand trembled, not from weakness, but excitement, so that she could hardly strike the knocker against the plate upon the door underneath the white-pillared porch.

"He asked for me, you say, Jeff?"

"He mus' a-done it, Miss 'Adny," said Jeff. "Nobody aint tole me so, but I des knows dat he's des cryin' fer you. Many a time I done see him tek a look at yo' picture in dat locket by de camp fiar."

"What locket?" asked Ariadne, but she had no time to pursue an investigation, for the door opened.

A tall, beautiful woman stood before her. She was as different from Ariadne as it was possible for a woman to be, a splendid, glorious creature, blue-eyed, bright-haired, cheeks that in happier days had gloried with colour, although now the pallid brush of trouble had washed them white.

"Madam," said a low, pleasant voice, expectantly.

"I . . . I am looking for a soldier . . . called Grafton. A Confederate soldier. Is he here?"

"He is."

"Is he alive?"

"Yes."

"Thank God! Where is he?"

"In that room yonder."

Ariadne started forward. The woman interposed a hand and would have questioned her further. Her eyes were bright with an emotion of some kind; what it was Ariadne did not know or care.

"I have come from Richmond to see him," she cried, and brushed aside the woman without a moment's hesitation. Followed by Jeff she entered the room.

At last there, indeed, lay Philip Grafton. He was

burning with fever, his eyes were like stars. He was moving his head uneasily on the pillow. One of his wasted hands lay on the coverlid. He was deathly white and terribly thin. Ariadne stopped, appalled. She clasped her hands. A long silence followed. Her bosom rose and fell, her body shook. Jeff flung himself upon the floor at his master's feet.

"Oh, Marse Phil!" he sobbed, "doan you know me? Gawd a-mighty, heh's Miss 'Adny come fer you, Marse Phil."

The woman who had admitted these two had followed them and stood in the doorway of the room watching. She did not understand who this strange girl could be, but her heart sank with a sudden premonition of disaster.

"Miss 'Adny?" she asked inquiringly, stepping forward. "You are a friend, a relation, of this gentleman, perhaps?"

"Madam," gasped Ariadne brokenly, "I am his wife!"

CHAPTER XII

REVELATIONS

THE words smote Kathleen like a blow. Like one stunned she stared in silent amazement at the figure of the other woman. Incapable of movement for the moment, she stood rooted to the spot watching Ariadne with the fascination of a charmed bird. Surprise, resentment, hatred—of Ariadne, not Grafton—succeeded each other in her heart and were expressed in her mobile countenance. She had never thought of this possibility, and the shock of the, to her, abrupt disclosure was almost more than she could bear. His wife! This, then, was the faithfulness of which she had dreamed, and she had even found her picture over his heart! How could that be since he was married to another?

Grafton had either been delirious or in a state of coma since she had received him in her home, but his talk—senseless raving though it was—had always been of her. Once or twice she had caught words of endearment, caressive terms with which she had not been familiar from his lips, and she had wondered and sought some explanation of them, but not long. The burden of his speech had been for her, of her, of her beauty, her cruelty, his love—and now his wife bent over him!

Kathleen hated the South; she hated its cause, she disliked the Southern people. But, most of all, she hated Ariadne. If love can spring full-armed from the human heart in an instant, so can its opposite make an immediate place for itself in the human soul.

What right had this slender, pale-faced Southern woman to rob her of Philip's love, what right? But stay. What right had she, Kathleen, to crave Philip Grafton's love? She had driven him from her, she had broken the engagement. She had, so she had declared, put him out of her heart forever. She had affected to despise him as she had rejected him, and, furthermore, she had—but Ariadne was speaking. Kathleen concentrated her attention on this most unwelcome visitor.

Since she answered that question with one rapid glance toward Kathleen, Ariadne had not looked at the other woman. She had only stared and stared at her dying husband.

"Oh, Philip, Philip!" she murmured softly, "to see you here! You do not know me. You don't know how I have tried to live for you, for you! How I have loved you. If you could only know that I am here! If I could only tell you once more before you leave me how I love you! You were so good to me always. If you could only speak just one word to tell me again that you love me! . . . your wife . . . Philip, Philip!"

Her words ran on softly, brokenly, regardless of who might hear her. It was the cry of a soul voiced for the dead which could make no answer. There were death and destruction in the heart of one of the listeners of whom Ariadne was so oblivious. Kathleen could endure it no longer. Her face flamed. Forgetful for the moment that Grafton lay dying apparently, she stepped quickly forward and laid her hand upon her rival's arm. It was well that she did so, for Ariadne could stand no more. She sank, a limp inert figure, in the arms of the other woman. She had collapsed utterly in a dead faint.

It was a curious situation for the mocking Fates. The woman who loved Philip Grafton and the woman he loved stood over his senseless, dying body holding in her arms she who was his wife—inert, unconscious, helpless. Kathleen was a strong woman, superbly vigorous. Ariadne could not be compared to her in that. There was something fierce in the gesture with which the Northern woman caught the Southern. For a second her arms tightened about her in obedience to an angry, hateful impulse, which was gone in the instant. Ariadne was a woman in trouble. All the goodness in Kathleen's soul—and there was much—came to the surface at once.

"Here!" she cried sharply to the dazed, bewildered negro boy, "help me. Take her feet. We will lay her on that lounge yonder."

Jeff had been a slave all his life, but he had never been so imperiously spoken to before.

"Yas'm," he answered, moving with astonishing celerity to obey her command.

Between the two they got Ariadne on the sofa. Bidding Jeff look to his master, who was never left alone, Kathleen loosened Ariadne's gown, applied restoratives, bathed her face, chafed her hands, used every expedient that the homely treatment of the day gave her knowledge of, to restore her to consciousness. The shock to Ariadne had been a severe one, and it was some little time before she opened her dark eyes and looked in bewilderment into the blue ones bending over her. But with consciousness memory came with a rush.

"You are very good to me," she murmured, "but I must go to Philip."

She strove to rise, but Kathleen's firm hand kept her down.

"Lie still," she said sternly, "for a few moments

at least." She looked toward the bed. "There has been no change. My God . . ." her voice rose almost to a cry . . . "how I have watched him! There has been no change for days."

"If it means so much to you," said Ariadne, noticing, although not comprehending, the depth of feeling in the reply, "think what it means to me. I . . . I am his wife"—why that damnable iteration? Kathleen could have struck her!—"and I love him so. Let me go to him!"

"You are weak, ill. Have you had anything to eat?"

"Something at noon. There was a kind Northern woman at the hotel. I walked the streets all day long. He wasn't at any of the hospitals or at the Dead House. No one knew of him. How can I ever thank you for taking him in?"

"I was glad to do it. You haven't asked what my name is."

"I do not need to know it to know that you have been an angel of mercy and kindness to one I love, but I should like to know it that I may never forget to remember you in my prayers."

"My name is Manning, Mrs. George Manning."

"I have heard Philip mention that name," said Ariadne; "he was a college friend, was he not?"

"Yes, and he is now a colonel in the Massachusetts line. He sent Phil . . . Mr. Grafton here."

"Did you know my husband before the war?"

"I had met him," replied Kathleen evasively. "But you must not talk any more now. I shall go and get you something to eat. Every woman in the town is in the hospitals. I gave up my own servants for that purpose with the rest. I have only one woman and a hired man or two and that woman shared the watch over . . . your . . ." Kathleen

could not frame the word—"over Mr. Grafton. She is asleep now, and her rest is sacred."

"Thank you," said Ariadne, sitting up. "I will take charge now. You can devote yourself to your own people. Your maid and I . . ."

"No one shall relieve me of my charge," cried Kathleen.

"It is very good of you, but I am his wife."

Ariadne looked up fearlessly at the other woman. She had no cause for alarm. She did not in the slightest degree understand the true situation. She wondered, of course, at the other's voice and manner, but she set it down to ways and customs with which she was not familiar. Ariadne's life had been a very circumscribed one. The plantation, the quiet years at Richmond, Philip, had been her horizon. It takes a great man or a great love to fill the horizon of a woman's vision—and Ariadne's was a great love. Kathleen put strong constraint upon herself and kept back the answer that rushed to her lips. As she turned to leave the room Ariadne stopped her.

"My husband's man, Jeff here, is an admirable cook. He can do almost everything, in fact, and he will be glad to help you."

Kathleen turned her eyes full upon the negro, who waited near the foot of his master's bed. He looked anything but capable or efficient.

"John," she said in a puzzled way, referring to her hired man, "said there had been a vagrant negro here inquiring for this officer. Why didn't you declare yourself?"

"'Deed, my lady, I didn't know wat mought happen to me. I'uz afeer'd dem Yankees mought clap me right inter de prison, an' I was des projekin' round der to git sum way to see Marse Phil heah an' den to fotch Miss 'Adny. I knowed he'd nebber

lib widout de li'l' Mistis'. I see him w'en he didn't think I lookin', an' he ain't ca'in' nohow, w'en he tek out dat lil' locket an' look at de paintin' an' shek he haid an' sigh des lak he gret heart mos' ready fer to bus'. I knowd how he done lub lil' Mistis heah. He ain't sayin' much 'bout her an' he eyes fill wid tears. But he doan cry, he jest shet he mouf an'"

"Jeff, what are you saying? Mister Philip has no picture of me?"

"'Deed he had, ma'am; I done see hit."

Ariadne looked toward the other woman in bewilderment. "What does he mean?" she asked.

"My dear madam, how should I know?" began Kathleen, who knew well enough what was about to happen. Indeed, into her mind light had come. She had noted the locket when Philip had been brought to her and had seen it often while she dressed the wound in his shoulder. She knew that locket, too; it was her own. Once she had yielded to temptation and looked to see if it still contained her picture—a wrong deed, but only those who have been in such a situation might censure; only those who have felt such an appeal, blame. So this wife knew nothing of the locket her husband wore? That was the first point that struck Kathleen. In that locket was the face of the woman whom he had loved before he had married this other. He loved her still, then. Kathleen looked swiftly, eagerly into the face of the other woman in sudden suspicion.

"Tell me," she cried, "are you really his wife!"

Another time Ariadne would have resented such a question with righteous indignation, but there was something below all this which she could not fathom. This woman acted so strangely. The question meant something. What? She would try to find out.

"I am," she replied firmly.

"But you are so young!"

"I was just sixteen when he married me, and he was to claim me after the war was over."

She could hardly explain why she made that last statement. Her relations to Grafton were no concern of this strange woman's—yet Ariadne would not sail under false colors a moment. Something constrained her to add that explanation.

"And the war is not over," cried Kathleen, a bitter smile of triumph upon her lips. "I understand it now."

"Understand what? There is some mystery here, madam. I demand to know it!"

One of those swift revulsions of feeling to which women are prone came over Kathleen, who was in many ways a creature of impulse, and for whose alternations of thought and action there was another excuse. Her heart was full of sudden pity for the poor unclaimed, unloved wife.

"Don't ask," she said; "let me persuade you. Lie down once more; you are not strong."

"I am strong enough for anything that concerns my husband."

"Have it your own way, then," said Kathleen, who had been standing between Ariadne and the bed. She now stepped aside and pointed to Grafton. Ariadne walked over to the bed and bent over her husband, the unconscious subject of all this strife. She folded back the sheet, opened the breast of his night-shirt, shuddered at the sight of the bandages, and there lay a locket. A little gold locket shaped like a heart. She had never seen it; she did not know what it contained.

"Yas'm, dat's hit," said Jeff, who had followed the scene with interest, although he comprehended little

of it; "dat's de ve'y one. I done see him kiss hit an' . . ."

Ariadne closed the shirt and drew back the cover.

"Don't you want to see the picture inside?" asked Kathleen.

"No," said Ariadne, wrenching the statement from quivering lips; "it is my husband's secret. I should not dream of opening that locket now."

But Ariadne was doubly bereaved now. She had never had a picture taken that would go in a locket of that size. She knew instinctively that it could not be her likeness that her husband had stared at and kissed so often. She jumped to the conclusion that it might be that of Kathleen Kirkwood, whose name had been so frequent in those latterday letters from college. Yet Grafton was the soul of honour—he had sworn there was nothing between them. Had he deceived her? She could no longer doubt it. Love, faith, hope—all went from Ariadne in that moment. Grafton was dying. She could have endured that, this wife in name only, if she could have believed that he loved her. It was evident now that he did not. She might have sustained the loss of his affection if she could have cherished his name in honour. Even that was denied her! No sudden death warrant read in the midst of life, joy, peace, health, strength, could have shocked her more.

So it was for this recreant she had striven to make herself a good wife! For this deceiver she had cherished such high ideals, which she had striven so hard to follow! Was it for this revelation that she had overcome obstacles, that she had pleaded with two Presidents and braved dangers and difficulties without limit? Was it in search for this traitor she had agonised in the hospitals? Had walked street after street searching for him until she dropped?

Ariadne was of finer fibre than the other woman. The temptation that urged her to look in that locket was greater than that felt by Kathleen, but she did not look. The other woman watched her eagerly. She had anticipated a moment of triumph. Ariadne had frustrated that expectation. Well, she should be made to look! Brushing aside the unresisting wife, Kathleen in turn approached the prostrate figure. Ariadne watched her, scarcely conscious in the blinding agony in her soul of what she was about. Kathleen nervously drew down the sheet, opened the shirt, lifted the locket. Then Ariadne realised.

"I forbid you to touch it!" she cried. Whatever happened she was still Philip's wife, and while he lay there helpless, hers was the decision in matters in which he was involved. She laid her hand upon the shoulder of the other woman as she spoke, but Ariadne's spirit, great though it was, was no match for Kathleen's strength backed by her fierce anger and jealousy.

"You shall see it!" she cried vehemently. Her fingers found the spring. "Look!" She detached it from the chain and held it open before the eyes of the other woman.

For a moment Ariadne tried to close her eyes. She thanked God afterward that she had succeeded in doing so, but no movement of the eyelid could be quick enough to prevent her recognising the face in the locket as that of the woman who thrust it before her.

"You!" she cried.

"I! It's my picture! My locket! He looked at it in camp, your husband. He kissed it there! He thought of me!"

"Gawd a'mighty!" gasped Jeff, perceiving now

whither his indiscreet babbling had tended, "I thought . . . I thought it was . . ."

"Silence!" interrupted Kathleen, who would not have her triumph spoiled by any such interruption. "He loves me, he loved me from the very first! Not you! See, the evidence!"

She shook the little damning trinket before the Southern girl. Ariadne started and stared at the woman and the locket. Still she did not understand.

"Who are you?" she asked at last.

"The woman he loves!"

"Your name, your real name?"

"Kathleen," said a faint voice from the pillow, "for God's sake don't cast me off because I must go with the South! I can't help that any more . . . than . . . loving you."

The feeble voice died away. It was as if fate itself had spoken. No more startling could have been the speech of Bacon's bronzed head. The two women listened to that voice from the dead in silence.

"I am . . . I was Kathleen Kirkwood," said the elder woman at last.

"But you . . . you said your name was Manning."

Kathleen's face flamed with colour. She had forgotten it!

"And do you, a married woman, love my husband?" persisted Ariadne.

What was the use of denying it?

"Yes," said Kathleen.

"Shame!"

"Spare me your comment, madam."

"And does my husband, a married man, love you?"

"I believe so; I hope so."

"Oh, my God, my God, why don't You strike me dead? That I should live to hear this!"

"Miss 'Adny, Miss 'Adny!" cried Jeff, clumsily stepping forward, flashing a look of hatred at the other woman. Ariadne turned to him.

"And you say that he used to look at that locket . . . to kiss it?"

"No, 'deed, I was mistooked, Miss 'Adny. I nebber see him wid no locket, 'deed, I ain't . . ."

"It is a kindly lie, Jeff, but I wish the truth now."

"Well, den, Miss 'Adny, yas'm," answered the negro desperately. "I wish ter Gawd I done got shot befo' young Marse Phil come heah."

"But he swore to me on his word of honour that there was nothing between you," said Ariadne, turning to the other woman.

"He told the truth," said Kathleen in answer to the mute appeal to the other's statement. Another swift change in her feelings had taken place. She was sorry and ashamed. "There was nothing. I was a foolish girl," she went on. "I told him he would have to give up the South or me. I didn't know. I thought I could persuade him. I've never seen him nor heard from him since that day." She made this admission grudgingly. Yet she could do no other. She, too, would fain defend Grafton's honour, even at the expense of her triumph in his love.

"You don't know the gentlemen of Virginia," said Ariadne proudly; "they prize honour above everything, even love."

"Is that an evidence?" cried Kathleen, angry again, pointing to the prostrate figure.

"Yes, indeed, and although I . . . I know he doesn't . . . love me . . . how could he . . . you are so beautiful . . . and I am nothing." Kathleen

bit her lip. "Yet he told me the truth. It was broken off; there was nothing between you. He saw how much I . . . I loved him."

There was great relief in Ariadne's voice. Philip did not love her, but he had spoken truly. Some of her faith came back to her, and she thanked God for it. If she had to choose between a lost love and a lost faith, she would have let her heart be the sufferer. She let Kathleen see that, too. There was no veiling of passions now between these women. They had got down to things elemental and simple in this great crisis. Their hearts were naked to each other, and even Jeff was an unconsidered trifle.

"He had lost you," Ariadne continued, justifying Philip to herself and to the other woman. Her husband might love whom he would, whom he must, she thought, but no one should impugn his honour. She reproached herself that she had done so in her heart for a moment. "I see it all, now," she said. "He . . . thought he could make me happy . . . and Grandfather happy. So he married me. He was always kind to me. I am glad to have my trust in him restored. Now . . . I . . . I must take him away."

"You cannot," said Kathleen bluntly. "It would be certain death to move him."

"Poor Philip, and will life hereafter be so pleasant to you that you crave it?" thought Ariadne swiftly. "You are right," she said at last. "I suppose he must stay here and . . ."

"And you must also."

"And eat your bread, accept your hospitality?"

"But think! Could anything drive you from the side of your husband now?" pleaded the Northern woman, somewhat strangely eager to keep Ariadne there.

"I have no money; I have spent it all getting here. But here is my watch. It is worth a great deal of money. Philip gave it to me. That will pay you."

"Do you think I wish pay, that I would take anything?" cried Kathleen violently, wishful to strike the outstretched hand.

"Madam," said Ariadne, with a sudden blaze of passion, "I will leave the house this instant unless . . ."

Kathleen realised the situation. The woman must stay with her husband now that there had been such a revelation between them. There was no other way.

"Very well," she said, "although I shall give it to charity I must let you have your own way."

"Thank you," said Ariadne.

She sat down by the side of the bed and took her husband's hand in her own.

"You will not prevent me from helping you to nurse him?" queried Kathleen, gone suddenly humble. There was something so desperately hopeless, crushed about Ariadne's look that it actually appealed to the other woman. The triumph had been such a sorry affair, after all.

"No," said the wife, "you he loves and your presence may help him . . . I . . . I shall assist you. I shall do what you say."

"I shall leave you alone with him for a little while, then," said Kathleen. "Come, Jeff."

She walked out quickly and closed the door, and no one knew what the effort cost her. She pictured Ariadne bending over her husband and pressing kisses upon his brow. She could almost hear her whispered endearments. It was torture to her, torture the more keen because all the time her conscience smote her at the thought of that brave and gallant soldier on the field, who had trusted her and her

honour, whose note committed his whilom friend to her care. The note lay on her secretary, where she had carelessly tossed it as she found it in her pocket the day after Grafton's arrival. She had betrayed her husband's trust, in thought at least. She had betrayed herself to this woman, Grafton's wife! With a bosom wrung and torn with conflicting emotions she sank down before that secretary and dropped her head upon the soldierly scrawl, written almost in blood as it were, which carried the love and confidence of her husband, and sobbed and sobbed, while Jeff, with that instinctive good breeding which slaves sometimes caught from their masters, softly left the room.

But Ariadne did not weep. She only looked piteously at her husband with every hope, every aspiration gone. She would have prayed, had it been possible, that she might change places with him lying there still and dying on the bed. The fountains of the great deeps within her were suddenly dried up and her soul had become an arid waste of mute expressionless sorrow. The head on the pillow moved uneasily and turned in her direction.

"Little sweetheart," came the words brokenly. She bent forward in one flash of hope instantly gone. There was no recognition in the wild eyes that met her own. "If I could only have loved her," the fevered voice ran on, "Ariadne . . ."

And it was the first time that he had mentioned her name since he had been stricken down upon that fatal hill.

BOOK THREE

Kathleen

CHAPTER XIII

THE DOUBLE TRUST

THEREAFTER a strange wrestle with death began; two women, their differences in abeyance, fighting for the life of Philip Grafton. A truce, definite and clearly understood, although its provisions were not committed to writing or made the subject of protocols, subsisted between them. Kathleen's strong common sense and Ariadne's sweet reasonableness brought about a *modus vivendi*.

At first Ariadne had peremptorily refused to leave the bedside of her husband. From a perfectly natural feeling of delicacy, Kathleen, who had been putting strong constraint upon herself, had hesitated to urge her to take any rest even. But such a persistent watch as the wife sought to keep was impossible to nature. Ariadne would have become ill if something had not broken the deadlock. The initiative came from the older woman.

"I understand how you feel, madam," she said after some hard thinking, "but you must see that the watch over your"—she could not frame that deciding word—"over Mr. Grafton must be divided. If there should be a change of any sort, any change for better or for worse, if he should regain consciousness during my hours of duty, I will summon you instantly."

"You will surely do so?" asked Ariadne, searching the other woman's face with wistful glance.

"I give you my word of honour."

"There is no need, I believe you. It must be as you say. I will go and get rest, if I can."

"You may depend upon me, madam. I shall keep faith."

"You are not keeping faith with your own husband," murmured the tired Ariadne, quite unconscious for the moment that she was voicing her thoughts.

"How dare you!" cried Kathleen, crimson with anger.

"I beg your pardon," said the gentle Southern woman deprecatingly. "I did not mean to speak aloud, but what I said is true and . . . he, too, was faithless . . . almost." She turned toward her husband as if to comprehend him in the compact of broken faith.

"If you only knew I . . . how much . . . we cared . . . before . . ." began Kathleen impulsively.

"Do you think," said Ariadne, "that I do not know what love is . . . and unrequited love, at that? Yet . . ."

"And do you think," cried Kathleen, "that I am not struggling against it now? I wish with all my heart that I had never seen him again! I am married to Colonel Manning. He is kindness and devotion to me itself. He is fighting the battles of his country now. It was he and my brother who sent"—she forced the word—this time—"your husband to me. They trusted me. For God's sake don't stand and look at me like a white-faced conscience! You know how you loved him. Try to understand . . . me."

The slender, youthful Ariadne, so straight, so dauntless, was the stronger and older, after all. The burden of the other woman's wayward passion was

upon her. She put out her hand and drew Kathleen toward her.

"You poor woman," she said, comprehending and pitying another's sorrow through her own suffering—the true precious jewel of adversity—"I do understand. May God help you and turn your heart to your own husband."

"And may he turn Philip's heart." Ariadne winced as Kathleen said this, but the Northern woman simply could not finish the sentence. "May God help me," she murmured in echo of the other's plea.

"He will, He will!"

"I think you are an angel," said Kathleen, bowing her head on her younger companion's shoulder.

Matters were on a practicable footing thereafter. By tacit consent they refrained from discussing their feelings toward Philip. Their conversation was at first confined entirely to his condition and the steps to be taken to save his life and promote his recovery. They met only at the table, for while one was awake the other slept, but two women could not be thrown together the way these two women were without entering into conversation upon other subjects, especially as the object of their common solicitude grew better although still not yet in his right senses. The doctor gave them hope that he would soon return to consciousness and that his convalescence would be speedy and practically certain.

Gradually there developed a constant interchange of opinions between them about the sole question—after Philip—that was uppermost in their hearts, that was uppermost in all hearts in those days, the war between the sections. Neither made the slightest effort to convert the other to her way of belief, yet the discussion did much to ameliorate prejudice

and soften animosity in both women. Differences of opinion seemed small things anyway in the presence of a precious life hanging in the balance. Each woman did the other good.

It was fortunate, from one point of view, that Grafton continued in such desperate case, for the irreconcilable differences between the two, growing out of their common devotion to the one man, were held in abeyance after the first shock had passed because of their intense desire for his recovery. If he died, the terrible bereavement would make all their sorrows faint, and there would be no longer cause for strife between them; if he lived, the common passion would add to the anguish in both their hearts, and in Grafton's, too, they both realised, but for the present they thought only of him. The future must take care of itself. It would be time to decide when the moment arose. Each woman sought only to live in the present, in her hope for Grafton.

Most of the soldiers wounded in the war received but indifferent care and suffered from lack of attention, but no man was ever watched and served as Grafton. The shrewd old doctor, pleased at the unusual situation, with the North and South both urging him on, devoted his best efforts to the case, and finally announced to them that in all probability Grafton would recover his consciousness shortly, and, if no complications set in, in a brief time he would be on the road to convalescence. Moved by a common impulse of joy and thanksgiving, the two women turned and clasped hands, forgetting all else for the moment but that.

That night Ariadne, who was not on watch, spent the hours deciding what she should do when her husband became conscious and out of danger, and making some preparations required by the decision to

which she came. The necessity for acting on her conclusion came upon her sooner than she had anticipated. The two women were at breakfast together in the long, old-fashioned dining-room with its pleasant outlook upon the broad fields of the farm, the administration of which Kathleen, in the absence of her brother—the two being without father or mother—had taken upon herself. The woman who relieved them in the sick chamber while they took their meals together came suddenly into the room.

“He’s awake, ma’am,” she said in great excitement, looking toward her mistress. “He’s been . . . leastways he opened his eyes and wanted to know where he was, and I told him not to speak, that I’d fetch somebody that would explain.”

The two women looked at each other in silence. What would happen now? It was Kathleen who spoke first. To her the woman had reported.

“Go back to him, and say to him that he is not to talk,” she said. “Tell him that the doctor will be here presently and he will explain everything.”

“And did . . . did he say anything . . . else?” asked Ariadne.

“Nothing that I could make out,” answered the woman. “He seems to have some arithmetic in his brain. It was something about addin’.”

“Go!” cried Kathleen angrily. “Why do you leave him alone?”

The two left behind in the dining-room well understood that Philip’s mind was not bent upon arithmetic. Into the mind of the wife flashed the consciousness that her name had been first upon his lips. She laid her hand upon her heart as if to still its throbbing. Kathleen leaned forward, her arm outstretched upon the table.

"I suppose now you will go to him?" she asked fiercely.

There was a long silence.

"Well, why don't you speak? You are his wife, you have every right; I am nothing."

"I shall not go to him," returned Ariadne quietly, but her lip trembled. "I shall never go to him again."

"What do you mean? You are his wife."

"In name only. I . . . I shall never be anything else."

"Do you contemplate divorce?"

"I do not believe in that; but, at least, I shall never trouble him again. I see now that he did not love me. He has never cared for me as . . . as a husband should. Oh, yes, he was always good and kind, but it is different. I shall go away and never trouble him again. Perhaps God will have pity upon us and make him free."

"You don't know what you are saying!" cried Kathleen. "Will you leave him to me?"

Was there some hidden threat in that question? Ariadne could not tell, but she did the magnanimous thing nevertheless. She stared hard at the older woman, and Kathleen could scarce sustain her gaze, although she was as fearless as a woman should be.

"Mrs. Manning," said the Southern girl—and the word shook Kathleen's determination, "I have known you a very short time, but I have studied you as few women have ever been studied before. I wished to know why Philip loved you"—a wan little smile that seemed more like a sob spread across her face—"you are beautiful, much better to look at than I, and"

"You don't know how good-looking you are!" cried Kathleen sharply. Ariadne shook her head.

“And you are sweet as well. Oh, yes, you have a temper, you are as impulsive as we are accredited with being down South, but you, *au fond*, are generous, loyal, true. Your husband trusted you . . . and he did well. I, too, leave him in your hands.”

Ariadne was without design, there was no duplicity in her nature. She spoke innocently what was in her sad heart. But not Macchiavelli himself could have made a more artful suggestion as to her course. She would not, could not, stay and fight for Philip's heart. To leave it to Kathleen's innate nobility was the safest way. A woman's intuition will sometimes insignificantly a Solon.

“But I . . . I love him, I tell you!” answered Kathleen boldly, trying to force the fighting tactics which promised best results for her.

“You can't help that any more than I can,” was the unexpected answer. “That makes no difference. I do not know my husband's heart, it seems, but I know his honour.”

“And you can trust his honour, I suppose, not mine?”

“Have I not said that I trusted yours?”

“I would rather you would fight me for his affection,” said Kathleen, ingenuously revealing another phase of her complex character.

“Love is not won by fighting,” answered Ariadne. “I know Philip's nature. His affections will never change. If it is any comfort to you, he will probably love you until the end of his life, but that is all. He will hold you, his friend's wife, as sacred as he has held me, his own wife.”

“Stop, stop!” exclaimed Kathleen. “I give him to you.”

“Would I take him from another woman's hand?” cried Ariadne, angered on the instant.

"No! It is all over between us," she went on more calmly after a little time. "I shall go away without a word to him. I ask you to give me your word of honour. . . ."

"Will you accept it?"

"Certainly, or I should not ask it . . . that you will not mention, or allow anyone else to mention my presence here? When my hus . . . Mr. Grafton is well he will be sent to some Northern prison; then he will be exchanged, I hope. At least I shall try to arrange it."

"But where will you go?"

"South, to my own people."

"Where, where!"

"I can tell you no more."

"Mrs. Grafton," said Kathleen—and it was the first time she had so addressed her—"I do not know what to say to you. But this I swear: Philip shall never know that . . . that I . . . that I still care."

"Don't promise that," protested Ariadne. "You could not be in his presence now without letting him know, and I need no oaths."

"You don't know what I can do," answered Kathleen resolutely. Somehow she felt in this moment of parting that she would give anything for the affection and regard of this wronged and suffering Southern woman.

There was a step in the hall.

"It's the doctor," exclaimed Ariadne, glad of the interruption.

Kathleen ran to him and brought him into the dining-room.

"He is awake, he is conscious," she cried.

"Good!" said the doctor; "I expected he would be. Now I think we may call him out of danger."

With two such nurses as you ladies, we'll soon pull him through."

"There will be but one, since I am leaving," said Ariadne.

"You . . . what . . . God bless my soul!" cried the doctor, peering at her through his glasses.

"I am going South now, this morning. Mrs. Manning will look after Mr. Grafton."

"But . . ." began the astonished physician, who knew, of course, that Ariadne was Philip's wife. "You're his wife, ma'am . . ."

"Doctor, there are things I can't tell you," returned the Southern woman. "I am his wife, but it is better that I should not see him, and more, I am going to beg you to promise me upon your word of honour that you will not tell him I have been here."

"I do not understand," said the puzzled doctor.

"I know, and it is ungracious to refuse to make any explanation, but my determination is irrevocable, sir."

The wise physician looked at the straight, dauntless figure of the Southern girl and realised that here was a case where argument would be useless. He bowed his head.

"I shall respect your wishes," he said.

"Oh, doctor," cried Kathleen, "can't you make her . . ."

"Madam," said the man, "here is the spirit of the South. It might be persuaded, it will not be coerced."

"You have been very good to my husband," continued Ariadne. "I wish I could compensate you . . . no, I could never do that, but at least show my appreciation of your kindness and services."

"Don't mention it, madam," said the physician.

"I am too old to fight and perhaps 'tis best for me to devote my energies to patching up the scars of warfare."

"You will ever have my gratitude. I shall never forget you in my prayers. I have had so much kindness in the North. We of the South did not know . . . we did not understand."

"There is kindness everywhere, thank God!" said the old doctor.

"And I wish to say," interrupted Kathleen impulsively, "that I . . . I think differently of the South since you have been here."

"You have been very good to me, too," said Ariadne.

"I've done nothing," answered the other.

"Doctor," continued the young wife, "here is a little trinket I wish you to wear to remind you of how I appreciate you and bless you."

Ariadne detached from a slender chain about her neck a tiny locket and pressed it into the physician's hand. He would have been perhaps unwilling to accept it, but he realised that the rejection would give pain to the woman who stood before him, and he could see that she was suffering enough. So he took it without demur.

"And now good-bye," said Ariadne, putting out her hand to him.

"My dear," said the old man, coming nearer to her and laying his hand upon her head, "I am an old man, old enough to be your father. Can't you confide in me?"

Kathleen turned swiftly and went to the other end of the room, where she stood and stared out of the window, clenching her hands and biting her lip.

"Can't I help you?" went on the doctor persuasively,

"No one, no one can help me but God," answered Ariadne, in a quivering voice.

"May He give you His protection, my child," said the old man, laying his hand gently on her head. He kept it there a moment with his face uplifted in prayer and then he turned and softly left the room.

Ariadne stepped to the outer door. Jeff sat on the porch basking in the warmth of the morning sun.

"Jeff!" she said.

"Yas, Miss 'Adny?"

"I'm going away. You know something of the state of affairs here?" The boy nodded. "Your master will recover now. I'm going South this morning. I do not wish him to know that I have been here."

"Does I go 'long wid yo', Miss 'Adny?"

"No, you remain with Mr. Philip. I shall move heaven and earth to have him exchanged, so that probably you will both be South so soon as he is able to travel."

"Is you gwine' 'lone?" asked the boy.

"Alone." Not until that moment did she realise exactly what the word meant. "Alone I came," she said steadily, "and alone I shall go back."

"Is you gwine to leab him wid dat yuther 'oman?"

"I leave him to his honour, and hers," said Ariadne, speaking to her heart and not to the humble black man who stood before her. "Here is a letter for Mr. Philip. You are to keep it and not give it to him until he leaves this house. You are not to tell him that I have been here until then. Will you promise me?"

"'Deed I will, Miss 'Adny."

"Can I depend upon you?"

"Sartin sho' you kin, Miss. I cross my heart an' bress. I swar I nebber tell him a word 'bout you."

"I believe you, Jeff. Good-bye."

She extended her hand to him. Jeff took it in both his great paws and, touched by the honour, shook it vehemently. She slipped a note into the pocket of his tattered jacket, a jacket which Ariadne's needle had made somewhat more presentable than it had been when first he met her. Jeff was as proud as his young mistress, and would not be beholden to the North if he could avoid it.

Ariadne then went back into the dining-room. The doctor was busy with his patient in the sick-room. Kathleen still stood by the window. Ariadne's bag was packed. She went up to her room, put on her hat, came down through the hall. The room in which her husband lay was opposite the dining-room. No one would ever know the yearning that was in her heart to enter that bed-chamber and take Philip in her arms. She went close to the door and pressed her head against it. She could hear his feeble voice. Terribly weak, yet it was his natural voice speaking, and speaking sanely apparently. She was too far away, he spoke too low, for her to make out what he said.

Perhaps if she could have distinguished the words she might have hesitated, but as it was, with a prayer to God, which was for the first time in many days, as much for herself as for him, she turned away and entered the dining-room. Kathleen was still staring out of the window. Ariadne entered softly and stood quietly looking at her for a moment in silence. There was no hatred in her look. Poor Kathleen, she could not help it. Ariadne could forgive any woman for loving Philip. That was not the painful part of the situation. She went over to her and touched her on the shoulder. Kathleen turned around, her face working, her eyes blinded.



“ ‘Good-bye,’ said Kathleen in a whisper; ‘I can’t hate you; I must love you!’ ”

"I am going," said Ariadne; "you were good to me. You will be good to him?"

"Stay!" cried the other, stretching out her hands. "He must, he will care . . . for you!"

Ariadne shook her head.

"Good-bye," she said.

Kathleen clasped her hand convulsively, and then she dropped it and put her own hands over her face. Ariadne turned away, crossed the room, went down the long hall, stepped upon the porch—that porch with the purple clematis twining around its white pillars, that porch where Philip had declared his love for Kathleen, and received his answer. When Ariadne had crossed that porch and descended its steps the house and its inmates would be behind her. That was her Rubicon. Only before her lay solitude, abandonment, a breaking heart—and hope behind. There was something in the fact that made her pause an instant. There was a rush of hurried feet along the hall, a woman's form burst through the door. Ariadne was seized in strong young arms, she was swept against a wildly-beating heart, lips were pressed to her own.

"Good-bye," said Kathleen in a whisper; "I can't hate you; I must love you. May God help me to do what is right!"

As quickly as she had come she was gone. Ariadne, who had stood like a statue, passive, unresponsive, but not indifferent, descended the steps, passed out through the gate and went down the hill alone.

CHAPTER XIV

A WRONG AMENDED

GRAFTON had no conception as to where he was, or how he got there when he opened his eyes upon that bright, cheerful bedroom. His first sensation, after his faculties became controlled, was of the spotless neatness of his surroundings. This was an unusual luxury. For months he had endured the hardships of camp, with its lack of all the refinements of life, and the sweet cleanness of everything about him he realised with grateful feeling of surprise.

He lay quite still for a few moments, for the woman who had bent over him and whom he had asked where he was had left the room. He could do little more than stare about him. He did not wish to lift his head for the present, nor could he have done it even had he so desired, but from where he lay he could see through the open window the green boughs outside swaying in the gentle breeze. Then his eye took in the characteristics of the room.

Rooms that are lived in partake of the souls of those whose lives are spent within their confines. This had been Kathleen's chamber before her marriage. When he had visited the farm before the war she had given it up to him on occasion. He was puzzled. It seemed familiar to him. Where had he seen that high bureau? Those pictures on the walls? There were signs of a woman's touch all about. Could Ariadne, whose name he had tried to speak before he recovered consciousness, have been there? If so, why was she not at his side? Poor little

Ariadne! The thought of one woman naturally brought another before him. Kathleen Kirkwood—it was her room! His heart was not too feeble to throb under the stimulus of that recognition. He knew the place now. How had he come there? Yes, he recalled the mad charge up that hill, the roar of cannon, the rattling of small arms, the fierce struggle around the flags on the crest. Kirkwood was in the Federal army. It must be due to him—— The woman returning to the room interrupted the reverie.

“You are to keep still an’ don’t talk until the doctor comes. He’ll be here pretty soon, I guess.”

“What day is it?”

“July 18th.”

“And I have been sick two weeks, then?”

“Yes, an’ we didn’t expect to pull you through, either.”

“Whose house is this?” persisted Philip. He must have assurance on that one point.

“It’s the Kirkwood Farm,” answered the woman; “but you’re not to talk any more.”

Grafton didn’t care to talk any more since he had received that confirmation. He was right, then; it was the home of Kathleen. The fortune of war had brought him into her presence again. Well, the earth was a small place, after all. Who could have thought that he would ever see her after she drove him from her on that summer morning two years ago? He had been free then—now there was his wife. He must be true to Ariadne. He must keep tight rein upon himself. He would be loyal to his wife. Kathleen should never know. Yet in spite of himself his heart exulted in the thought that he was to see her again. He had ample food for thought as he lay there quietly with his eyes closed. He wondered how she looked, how she was. He wondered whether she

knew he was married. How that thought kept recurring to him.

He wondered, too, about his own wife. Did she know? Had anyone written to her? Did she believe him dead? A great wave of pity filled his heart as he thought how she must be grieving for him. Alone in Virginia, with miles of bayonets, which neither he nor she could pass, between them. Imminently in the presence of the woman he loved, yet he thought more tenderly and affectionately of his wife than ever before. This was a surprise to him. He could not quite understand it; he did not know whether he was glad or sorry because of it, but his thoughts wavered between the two women. Presently the doctor came in.

"Well, sir," he said cheerily, "you have had a long siege of it, young man."

"Yes?" answered Philip inquiringly. "What was the matter with me?"

"Bullet through the groin, piece of shell through the right arm, another bullet through the right shoulder, and a bad smash on the head that looks as if it might have come from a sabre."

"Will I get well?" asked the patient.

"Well, now, I consider that a reflection on my professional skill!" answered the physician, smiling. "Of course you will get well. With a constitution like yours you could have carried several more pieces of lead and iron without succumbing. But when you are well it will be due more to the excellent nursing of these women than to me."

"I know," said Philip, "and I am very grateful. When can I see Miss Kathleen?"

Now the doctor had, of course, learned that Mrs. Manning and Grafton had been old acquaintances. Had he not known Kathleen himself from a child and

been in the habit of calling her Kathleen he would have felt surprise at hearing her so referred to, but he never noticed Philip's remark and answered promptly.

"You shall see her this morning. You owe her a debt of gratitude, young man."

"I can guess it," answered Philip.

"Now," continued the doctor, "you are not to talk much. I shall lay that charge upon your nurse. If you follow my directions I think I can promise you a rapid recovery."

"I am a soldier, doctor, and accustomed to obey," said Philip.

"Good! I shall expect you to do so. I shall look in on you this evening. There are so many wounded here that we haven't long to stay with our patients. Good-morning," said the doctor, picking up his bag and turning away.

"One moment, sir," said Philip. "The battle? Did we win?"

"You lost it," returned the old man gravely. "But you made the finest charge in history, you Virginians."

"Did Lee get away?"

"Safe and sound with all his army, although we tried hard enough to prevent him," he answered as he passed out of the door.

There was another question Philip had intended to ask, but that could wait until the morrow. The conversation with the doctor had exhausted him not a little. He lay quiet with his eyes closed. The room was very still, so still that the silence at last became oppressive. He opened his eyes and looked up. There bending over him was the girl with the bright hair and the blue eyes, of whose face he had so often dreamed.

"Kathleen," he whispered, "is it you?"

“Yes, Philip.”

He was too weak to see at first how white she was. The colour was gone from her cheeks; her lips were paler than they were wont to be.

“Did you bring me here?”

“My brother and . . . Colonel Manning . . . picked you up on the field and sent you to me.”

“What a trouble I must have been,” he murmured.

“Don’t say that!” she replied; “I was glad to help you.”

“A Southerner . . . an enemy?”

“We are no longer enemies, Philip.”

Oh, how her soul yearned toward him! She could have knelt down and taken his head in her arms; her heart would fain burst out in passionate tenderness over him. But between her face and his she saw Ariadne, slender, straight, dauntless, and beautiful in her pallor. She clenched her hands and swore that she would be true to her husband, true to Ariadne, true to herself; but it was so hard, so very hard. She did not dream that it would be like this.

“I must tell you,” said Grafton suddenly, “I . . . I am married.”

Had he been himself he might have told her more delicately; but he knew it must be done, and he did it in the shortest, the quickest way.

“Yes,” said Kathleen, as if the matter were of little or no importance. She divined exactly why he told her, and her matter-of-fact way of receiving his news—for she gave no outward sign that her heart was breaking—startled him.

“It was not that I had forgotten you, Kathleen,” he began. “But because I . . .” He checked himself just in time. This was not loyal to Ariadne. All that was necessary for Kathleen Kirkwood to

know was that he was married. "They tell me I have been here two weeks," he continued.

"Yes," said Kathleen. "And we thought you might be here . . . forever."

"The doctor says it is due to your nursing that I owe my life. I am grateful. I must live . . . for Ariadne," he muttered faintly enough; but she heard the name—"for Ariadne."

The woman was gone out of Kathleen's life, from out of Philip's, too. Was the memory of her, the sound of her name, to be ever present?

"Did you send her any word?" he asked at last.

Kathleen could not trust herself to speak; mindful of her plighted word to Ariadne she shook her head.

"Had . . . has no message from her reached you?"

"None."

"But of course she could not know," he faltered, and there was a great feeling of disappointment in his tone. "I am very grateful to you, though."

Kathleen felt ashamed to take to herself all that praise, some of which belonged to Ariadne. But she could say nothing; her promise fettered her. The interview was too much for her after what she had gone through. She let her hand fall on Philip's forehead and found that it was cool, the first time in many days.

"The doctor told me that you were not to talk," she said to him.

"Don't leave me," pleaded Grafton; "I will be very quiet if you will only stay here."

Kathleen nodded her head and sat down in the chair near the bed.

"Not there," said the young man. "Won't you move where I can look at you without turning my head? You know how I used to like to look at you."

Kathleen moved her chair as he wished and sat there resolutely looking away from him. She was fighting a battle as fierce as any waged between contending armies—a battle in her own soul. There are passions in lonely human hearts which mock those that inhabit the field. Kathleen's heart was a house divided within her. Philip had the larger share, but some of her affection went back to the camp in Virginia, where her husband lay with his men, and some of it followed the slender figure of Ariadne—the dauntless—as she resolutely held her way southward.

Conflicting passions tore Kathleen's being. There was hope for her. A week since there had been one object in her heart, the man by her side. Now it was just beginning to be—different. She sat there a long time fighting her battle in silence. To suffer and to give no sign—that is the heroism of woman. By and by the struggle for self-control became insupportable; she rose from her chair to leave the room. She could not resist one glance at her patient. He was asleep. He had met her eyes when he awakened; upon her his eyes had lingered until he slept. Yet he dreamed of Ariadne! Kathleen, kneeling by his side, pressed her lips to the pillow on which his head lay. She stood over him, one hand upon her heart, the other outstretched to him in yearning, or benediction, she could not say. She watched him a moment or two and then turned from the room.

In the library hung a picture of her husband. She knelt down before it and prayed as she had never prayed before, for strength to keep the faith and be a woman true. Then she went back into the sick-room again to resume her watch. She was stronger now—something of the peace she asked for filled her soul.

Grafton was awake when she entered, and she con-

fronted him with more mastery of herself. She did not shrink when he said that some one must write to his wife. Although she knew that no letter could reach Ariadne now, and that there was no need of one, she humoured him, bringing paper and pen and writing at his dictation.

I said that peace had begun to be in Kathleen's heart, but it was only a foreshadowing after all, as if in an o'ercast sky there should appear on the far horizon a little gleam of sunlight, as it were, a man's hand. To sit there and take down that letter was the hardest task that had ever fallen to her.

"My dear wife," said Philip slowly; "I was wounded in Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. Kirkwood and Manning had me sent here and Miss Kathleen Kirkwood has nursed me back to life." Kathleen paused when she heard that last sentence from his feeble lips. She must tell him of her marriage; he himself had set the example; yet she hesitated. "I was unconscious until this morning, and the first thing I am writing to you to tell you that I shall get well and to charge you not to worry," he resumed. "I shall seek you as soon as I am exchanged. Miss Kirkwood is writing this for me. May God keep you." He stopped.

"Don't you wish to say any more?" asked the woman.

"That's all," returned the man. "Sign it 'your affectionate husband.'"

"Haven't you a word of love?" burst out Kathleen, "to send to that poor child? Think how frantic she must . . ." She stopped.

"Love, Kathleen?" said Philip; "God help me . . ."

"Don't say it!" she interrupted, her voice thrilling with suppressed emotion.

He stared at her in amazement. The woman who had assisted in nursing him before his wife came now entered the room.

"Mrs. Manning," she began, delivering herself of some trivial message. The colour came back into Kathleen's face then. She gave the woman her answer, and when she left the room she turned to face her patient.

Philip was looking at her with curious intensity.

"What did she call you?" he asked.

"Mrs. Manning," answered Kathleen.

"Are you the wife of George Manning?"

"I am."

"When did you marry him?"

"In September, 1861."

There was a long silence.

"Forgive me," said Grafton at last, "do you love him?"

He forgot that he had checked his disavowal of affection for Ariadne. He did not realise that his question was an improper one. He had been so ill and was so weak that he was not master of himself. Had he been in possession of his strength and his faculties he would not have presumed to ask such a question. As it was, all the appeal in his soul, all the passion he had repressed for two years rose to his lips and shone in his eyes. It took heroic courage to resist that eloquent if voiceless pleading. Yet Kathleen rose to the full measure of true womanhood at that moment.

"Yes," she answered simply; "I love him."

"May you be very happy together," said Philip, turning away.

Ah, yes, Kathleen had, consciously and unconsciously, grievously wronged Ariadne, but in that supreme moment she made a great atonement.

CHAPTER XV

THE CHANGING CURRENTS

THE desire to have what one cannot have is always keener than the desire to enjoy what one can. With Philip it worked two ways. Kathleen's sharp monosyllable shattered his air castle irrevocably. Although he had married he had never for one moment imagined that she could do the same. His marriage was so formal an affair, anyway, that at times he almost forgot that he was bound. With her naturally it was different.

The first pang was jealousy. The next was relief. Philip was not a hero of romance; he was a plain, everyday, practical, honourable young man. He recognised, of course, that Kathleen was always a temptation to him. His common sense told him that the fact that she had married, and married one of his dearest friends, was an added safeguard; and Philip was glad for that. He was glad, too, that he had discovered it as soon as he had.

The weakness attendant upon the long illness, the slow period of recovery in which a woman's care means so much, bring about more love affairs than any other conditions, comparatively speaking. The trained nurse is not booked for the old maid's station, unless she chooses. A pretty nurse—and even a homely one—and an ill bachelor, or a widower, very often come to sustain other and sweeter relations than those they originally filled. Many a woman in nursing a man back to health has nursed herself into his heart. Such marriages are usually happy, too, for a

man who is worth loving when he is sick is a man indeed! Now that Grafton knew that Kathleen was married, and happily, that she loved her husband, and that her husband was his friend, he would cut out his tongue rather than have allowed himself to allude to any previous engagement, or affection, that had obtained between them. Grafton had two objects of endeavour before him: first, to get well; second, not to betray his feeling for Kathleen. Kathleen had two objects also; they were similar to Grafton's—to get him well and not to discover to him her own heart.

Singularly enough the most effectual help that either of them got in their brave endeavour was the memory of Ariadne. There are some affections which grow even with distance and absence. Some natures idealise in separation what seems simple enough in actual touch. Ariadne had been very brave, very generous and very honourable. Often and often when Kathleen could scarcely command herself the brave young Southern woman, so straight, so dauntless, would seem to be standing by her side, giving her help. She could feel the soft touch of restraint upon her arm which she welcomed. She could hear the soft voice say, "I trust him and I trust you." That made her strong. She would be worthy the confidence that had been reposed in her. She would be true to George Manning, and to the Southern woman, and to the innate nobleness of her own soul. With Ariadne's help she conquered.

Philip in the presence of Kathleen thought often of his wife, thought of her with a genuine feeling of surprise. He had not dreamed that under such circumstances—Kathleen's presence!—his mind would have recurred so frequently to the woman who bore his name. If he had been asked before to imagine

such a situation he would have said that the earth could hold nothing for him but Kathleen. Now he found himself thinking much the same thing of his wife.

The one thing that retarded his recovery was the fact that he had heard nothing from her. As he grew better he had painfully written to her, not once, but several times, and the love Kathleen had missed from the first letter he dictated to her was in these other missives. He put it in, himself, as he fancied, from duty and pity. These things are akin to love, they say; yet Grafton did not realise at that time their relationship. Those letters had been forwarded by secret means which were available. They contained nothing whatever that was harmful to the North or useful to the South, and Kathleen did not hesitate to use her influence—which was considerable—with certain persons in authority to get them through the lines. No answer ever came back. If the earth had swallowed Ariadne she could not have been more silent and unheard from.

Again and again Kathleen was on the point of telling Grafton that his wife had been there, but she had pledged her word to the Southern woman, and she would not break it. The mere fact that those love letters, which Grafton had received so carelessly and had read with pity more than anything else, had stopped, and that he could not hear from her, or about her, opened his eyes to the hold this woman had taken upon him.

He had ample time to analyse his emotions, and he discovered presently that he was in love with both women, which was sure evidence that he was not very deeply in love with either of them. In other words, his love for Kathleen had already begun to wane, while his love for Ariadne had only commenced to

grow. The waning was the harder process. It had at first required every effort of his will to put Kathleen aside; the growth of his feeling for his wife was a natural one, and, like things which are destined for long life and strength, it was very slow.

Kathleen constantly helped him in both his mental processes. She set herself resolutely to talk about her husband. She prattled to him about Manning by the hour. She read his letters to her; in short, she behaved as the fondest wife would behave to an old friend of hers and her husband's. And she forced him to talk about Ariadne. She made him describe her, and she admitted to herself that his description, based on the eyes of friendship and ages old at that, fell so far short of the original that she wondered what would happen when he found her again. What a revelation of beauty she would be to him then?

The iron entered into her soul, but she did all that she had set herself to do. Her passionate, more fiery, more tempestuous nature was deeper than the man's. At first her devotion to him did not waver, yet never once did she betray herself to him. As she persisted in her courageous self-sacrifice some of the compensation of such endeavour came to her. As she re-read her husband's letters, those letters which at first, like Ariadne's to Philip, were matters of little moment to the recipient, she began to see what a splendid, manly man he was. And Grafton's encouraging praise and approbation opened her eyes further.

She had taken Manning in a moment of pique and anger and had never valued him for his sterling qualities. He was not a brilliant man, like Grafton and her brother, but there was much in him to admire. She saw that now, and Grafton helped her to see it more clearly. He had lived with Manning in the

close intimacy of college life for six years, and he knew him better than she. By and by, when his name was mentioned in despatches for conspicuous gallantry in an action which he had fought alone with his regiment during the pursuit of Lee from Pennsylvania, Kathleen's heart filled with a sudden glow of pride. She still loved Philip, she thought, but she was no longer indifferent to Manning. So the various currents of these different lives swept on.

As Grafton got better, which he did rapidly, he wrote to Manning a frank, manly, grateful letter, the letter of an old friend who had never lost his love for his old companion, although they were arrayed against each other in war, and one in which he sang the praises of Kathleen. How kind she had been to him. What was of greater importance, he told Manning how Kathleen had let him see how much she cared for her husband. He was anxious for the day when he could see his old college mate, when peace should be declared, and there would be no obstacle to the renewal of their ancient friendship. Then he told Manning about his own wife, and, enclosing a note, begged him to read it and forward it through the lines, if by any possibility it could be arranged. He wrote a similar letter to Kirkwood, too. The armies were in camps facing each other then and such communication often passed.

It was a letter which filled Manning's heart with joy. Too honourable to voice his suspicions further than he had done, he had fought two enemies during that campaign, one green-clad, the other grey—jealousy and the Confederates! He could have obtained a brief leave of absence after the campaign was over, but he refrained. He had trusted Kathleen. He would continue to do so. His consideration, which she was quite wise enough to realise, was not without

its value to Kathleen's soul as well. She thought better of the man always.

One day she had a telegram from her husband begging her to meet him in Washington, to which point he was ordered with some captured battle flags, to be delivered to the Secretary of War. He would have a few hours there. Would she come?

Kathleen shrank from that meeting after all she had gone through, but because she shrank she determined to go to him. Contact with Ariadne, the suffering she had undergone, the trust that had been reposed in her, all had helped her nature. Grafton was practically well. She could hardly hope to keep him longer at the farmhouse. Already officers from the provost marshal had come to know when they could take charge of their prisoner. He must soon depart to share the fate of the other Confederate captives. There was no excuse for her non-compliance with her husband's request. She would go.

She bade Grafton good-bye with a steady hand and a quiet voice. She told him where she was going, when she could come back, and begged him to consider the place his own until she had returned. Grafton followed her out on the porch and watched her go down the path. No one had watched Ariadne go alone; the Southern woman had gone with a breaking heart. Her Northern sister was not happy, in her departure, but her state was not to be compared to that of the wife who had put behind her everything and had gone out into the world unaccompanied, nothing whatever before her, to fight her battle alone.

Grafton sat down on the porch and thought of Ariadne. Her silence had preyed upon him until he was filled with anxiety and alarm. To him came the old doctor, who, passing by and seeing him on the

porch, with genial kindness drew rein and descended from the buggy, coming up to speak to him. He stumbled on the first step. He seized the railing of the porch with his hands as he fell forward. His watch guard caught a nail which had been used to hold a clematis vine. The force of the wrench tore from the guard a little object which hurtled through the air and, as chance would have it, landed in Philip's lap. The doctor straightened himself and stepped forward. Grafton had the trinket that had been detached in the palm of his hand.

"Where did you get this?" he asked.

"I gave my word of honour not to say," returned the doctor, stretching out his hand for it. But Grafton's hand closed over it.

"I beg your pardon, Doctor, but I must know."

"Must know what?"

"Where that locket came from. It is . . . it is my wife's. I gave it to her shortly after our marriage. See?"—he turned the other side up. "Here are her initials. How came it into your possession?"

"My dear Mr. Grafton," returned the doctor, "I scarcely know what to say to you. I came honestly by it."

"That, of course."

"But the person from whom I received it exacted a promise from me. I cannot break it."

"Was my wife here when I was unconscious?"

The doctor said nothing.

"She is a tall, slender young woman, with very dark hair and eyes. A low, sweet voice; she is rather pretty."

"Rather pretty!" cried the doctor in a voice in which surprise struggled with disgust at Grafton's apparent lack of appreciation. "Good Lord!"

"She was here, then?"

"I can tell you nothing, nothing. Ask Mrs. Manning."

"She has gone to Washington to see her husband. Doctor, if you could give me some word from that child, I am sure . . ."

"I am very sorry for you, Mr. Grafton," said the doctor stubbornly. "I cannot break my plighted word."

"I know that, of course. A gentleman's promise is sacred," answered Philip; "but can't you give me some indication, or . . ."

"You have had all the indications I can give," interrupted the doctor. "If you don't mind I'd like to have my locket back."

"Certainly," assented the young man, handing it to the doctor. "I wish I could add something to it myself to express my appreciation of your services."

"I prize it," continued the physician, "because it reminds me of . . ."

"Of whom?" asked the young man as the doctor paused.

"Oh, nothing," returned the old man evasively. "I do wish I could tell you. I would give anything to do so. There is some mystery connected with it; what it is I cannot say. Even if I could I have given my promise. When you are exchanged you will perhaps find it out. Some day," he continued, "I should like to hear the end of the romance."

"The end of it?" cried Philip. "What do you mean?"

"They say," said the doctor, ignoring the question, "they say exchanges are being arranged for, and you men that we have patched up will be going South presently to get ready for another spell of our attention. Perhaps you can find out then."

"I mean to," returned Grafton. "Meanwhile, I

wish to thank you. It's all I can do now for what you have done for me. I assure you I appreciate it."

"You needn't thank me," said the doctor. "I did mighty little. It was those women."

"What women?"

"Why, Mrs. Manning and . . . and . . ."

"Doctor, for God's sake tell me!"

"My boy," said the doctor, "I wish I could, but I can't. I must be going now. Good-bye. If you take care of yourself you will be all right soon. But don't get any relapses or our work will go for nothing."

He turned and walked down the path and Philip watched him. The doctor held many secrets locked in his old breast, none that he wished so much to tell as that one; yet he held his peace. He did not know, any more than a few surmises enabled him to guess, what was the real state of affairs, but he was sure there was a tragic story behind Ariadne's pale face and desperate manner. When he looked at Grafton he hoped for the end.

"Poor little girl," he murmured as he glanced at the locket in his great palm, "that young fellow really seemed to wish to know desperately what had become of her. He seemed to love his wife. And if there was ever love exhibited in a woman's bearing it was in hers for him. But if he loves her and she loves him, why go away and why swear me to secrecy, I wonder?"

CHAPTER XVI

THE REVELATION

THE question was an unsolvable one to the doctor, but it was maddening to Philip. Ariadne must have been there, then. Why had she left? Where had she gone? What did it mean? He longed for the return of Kathleen, not for the pleasure of her society, but that she might resolve this mystery and tell him something of Ariadne. The woman who had assisted the two who loved him was gone away on a visit; a new servant was in the house. She could tell him nothing. Stop, there was Jeff! He had almost forgotten Jeff. He had been there all the time. He must know.

As soon as Philip had become convalescent the greater part of his care had devolved upon the faithful body-servant, and Jeff never left his master for very long. The negro, well-fed, happy, and better dressed, because Grafton had directed him to accept some of Manning's cast-off clothing which Kathleen had before tried in vain to persuade him to wear, at that moment came ambling around the corner. Grafton was never more pleased in all his life to see that black face and figure.

"Jeff," he cried, "come here!"

"Yas, suh, Marse Phil. Huccum you ter be outer de gal'ry dis arf'noon? Can't you feel de col' a'r blowin' on you?"

"It is as warm and balmy a breeze as I ever felt in my life. I'm all right. I wish to ask you a question."

"Ax me, suh?"

"Yes, and I wish the truth."

"Doan I allus tell you de truf, Marse Phil?" reproachfully.

"Generally, but you're not like Cæsar's wife, you know."

"I ain't lek nobody's wife, Marse Phil. I'se a wot you may call hit . . . a backslider 'bout wimmin fo'ks, suh."

"Then you're less above suspicion than ever," smiled Grafton. "Who nursed me when I was unconscious?"

He shot the question straight at the negro like a shot from a gun.

"Wy . . . wy . . ." gasped the boy.

"Quick, now!" said his master. "No hesitation. Who was it?"

"Miss . . . Miss . . ."

"Miss Ariadne?"

"Now how you done find dat out, Marse Phil?"

"She was here, then?" exclaimed the young man triumphantly.

"Oh, Lord, oh, Lord!" groaned Jeff, "an' I done tole her dat I'd die befo' I tole you. Twell be time to gib up dat letter."

"Jeff, have you a letter for me, you black rascal? Do you mean to say . . . give it to me instantly!"

"But Marse Phil . . ."

"Not another word!" rising to his feet and standing tremblingly. "Look at me, Jeff. You know I am not able to stand here long. If I were in my right strength I'd give you the worst hiding you ever had for not telling me!"

"'Deed, 'deed Marse Phil, I . . ." began Jeff, rolling his eyes terrifically.

"And if you don't give me that letter at once I'll

die right here in my tracks. I'll stand until my wounds open and I"

"Here 'tis, Marse Phil. Fer Gawd sake, suh, set down an' tek hit easy an' I'll tell you ev'ything."

He fished out of his pocket a note, soiled and worn from his carriage of it. He had not dared allow it to leave his possession.

"I'd gib hit to you 'long 'go, Marse Phil, ef I hadn't swo'n an' cross my bress dat I wouldn't tell you twell you was gwine to be tuk away fum heah. I done promise Miss 'Adny, suh, an' as I'se a gent'mun's nigger I couldn't brek my word."

He rambled on incoherently, but Philip's mind was elsewhere. He held the note in his open hand. It was proof positive. Ariadne had been there. The questions surged through his heart again. When had she come? How long had she stayed? Where had she gone? Why had she not waited for him. Why had Kathleen concealed her presence from him? He was almost angry with her as he thought these things with her letter unopened in his palm. He had been so shocked by the whole affair that he felt he must have some little time to recover himself before he read the note. Some premonition of its contents had come to him. This letter would explain his failure to hear from her, her silence. He knew now that she could, if she had chosen, have communicated with him in some way. The fact that she had been there proved her capacities. What did it mean? He tore open the note and read it. And this is what it said:

"PHIL—I heard that you were left on that hill at Gettysburg. I managed to get through the lines to Washington. The President of the United States aided me to get here. I found you. I found more than you. I have learned the truth at last. You do

not love me, you have never loved me. You married me to please my grandfather and because in my innocence and my ignorance I showed you how much I cared for you—may God help me—how much I still care! I know that you have always loved Kathleen Manning, that was Kathleen Kirkwood. I understand everything that was before a mystery to me. I have no blame for you or for Mrs. Manning. She begged me to stay with you, but I could not. I have waited until I knew that you would get better, and now I must go. I no longer believe in your love; you have none for me, but I still trust your honour. Kathleen is now a married woman, the wife of your friend. You will not forget it. Nor will she. I am sorry for you both, for I understand what it is to love without hope. May God have mercy on us all! I am your wife, and until death severs us I must remain so, but when I leave you here I go out of your life forever. When you get back to Richmond I shall not be there. It will be useless for you to seek me. You will remember me and I—I shall never forget you. My heart goes out to you. Oh, if you could only have loved me as you loved this other woman how happy I would have striven to make you. I have watched over you in your delirium and have heard you call her name and once in a while mine—‘Poor little Ariadne, poor little Ariadne.’ I cannot write any more, Philip. God knows I love you still; I always have, I always shall! That’s all; but good-bye and may God bless you. For the last time I sign myself,
“YOUR WIFE.”

So that explained it! And yet not all of it. There was an allusion all through the letter to the fact that Kathleen reciprocated the passion Ariadne believed he still cherished for her. Yet Kathleen had told

him herself that she was married, and happily, and he was bewildered. He put his hand to his head as in a dream. His mind wandered. What if they all had been playing at cross purposes? Did Kathleen love him? Did she love George Manning? Did he, Philip, love Kathleen? Did he love Ariadne? What was the end of this mysterious knot of human fate in which the threads of their lives had been so entangled?

"Jeff," he said at last, "you know something of this. Your young mistress was here and has gone? Why?"

"Marse Phil, I'se feared to tell you, suh."

"Speak. Tell me just what you think. Anything will be a help now."

"Well, suh, I was in yo' room w'en Miss 'Adny cum. I mought as well mek a clean bress of hit, suh. I done wrong." The faithful negro hesitated.

"What did you do?"

"I done tole Miss 'Adny how much you keer fer her, suh."

"That was right."

"Yas, suh, but I done tole her dat you look at her face in de lil' locket, an' I tole her you tek hit out an' kiss hit."

"Jeff, Jeff!" exclaimed Philip.

"Yas, suh, I knowed t'was wrong arter de yuther lady show Miss 'Adny who was in dat lockit."

"Did she do that?" groaned Philip.

"Yas, suh. Miss 'Adny done see de lockit on yo' bres' w'en she bend ober you, but she ain't look in hit."

"God bless her faithful, noble, gentle heart!" cried Grafton.

"But de yuther lady she done open hit an' poke hit in Miss 'Adny's face, suh. Dar dey stood an' you

a-dyin,' suh. One was red wid rage an' cryin' an' Miss 'Adny she was white an' stret an' still, only her eyes was a-blazin', suh, an' den she drap down an' Miss Mannin' she was good to Miss 'Adny."

"I understand," said the young man sadly.

"An' I got some mo' to tell, suh," said Jeff.

Philip looked up again.

"Go on."

"Dey was right down offish wid one an'er fer a long time, but dey got mo' sociable like afo' she go away, an' dat mornin' Miss 'Adny gib me dat letter fo' you an' tol me to gib hit to you w'en you was a-leabin' heah, an' de yuther lady was a-standin' by de winder in de dinin'-room yander, an' de winder was open an' I heerd dem. Miss 'Adny say she trus' you an' trus' her, an' den I looked in fru de winder an' I see Miss 'Adny come down to yo' do. You was a mutterin' to yo'sef in dar an' she heerd you. She des put up her han's on her bres' an' oh, Gawd a'mighty, Marse Phil, I niver wants to see sech a look on nobody agin like dat." Jeff stopped and a great tear rolled down his black cheek.

"Go on," cried Philip. "What next?"

"Den she went in de dinin'-room, an' presen'ly she cum out fru de hall an' fru de do' an' stop on de po'ch an' look back poisin' on her feet des lak a lil' bird gittin' ready to fly away, you know."

Philip nodded; he saw it all.

"Den Miss Mannin' she cum a-runnin' fru de hall an' she grab Miss 'Adny in her arms an' she say suppin' an' kiss an' kiss her, an' den cum back an', an' dat's all, suh."

That was enough. It was all as plain as day to Philip now. His heart went out to that little figure at the open door poised on reluctant feet like a bird on the edge of flight. He would give all he pos-

sessed, he would be glad to go back again on that bed of pain from which by a miracle he had recovered, if Ariadne could only be by his side. She had gone out of his life—forever? Never! He would hunt through the length and breadth of North and South until he found her. He lifted the letter and kissed it again and again.

A squad of soldiers came up the road. They had an ambulance with them. A mounted non-commissioned officer rode in front. Halting the soldiers outside he rode into the road and stopped before the porch.

“Is your name Grafton?” he asked.

“It is.”

“Sergeant of the Ninth Virginia Infantry, Rebel Army?”

“You have named my rank and regiment in the Confederate service,” said Philip gravely.

“You are my prisoner,” returned the other. “We are sending a batch of you Johnnies away to-day, and I guess you are well enough to travel.”

“I am glad to go,” said Grafton, whose hope now was in an early exchange. He was on fire to go South to seek for his wife.

“Kin I go wid him, Marse Officer?” asked Jeff.

“I guess so,” said the officer, “if you like.”

“If you will give me a moment,” said Grafton, “I will report to you here.”

“You won’t try to get away?” asked the other.

“I give you my word of honour.”

The sergeant of the squad looked at the pale-faced young man a moment, and, realising that he was to be depended upon, saluted—a tribute to birth and breeding, not to rank—and answered:

“Very well, sir. I will wait here.”

Philip went back to the room which had been his

own for so long. He drew from his breast the fatal locket. On a sheet of paper he wrote: "I have discovered all. I bless and thank you for all you have done. I go to seek her." He put the letter and locket in an envelope, sealed and addressed it to Mrs. George Manning and laid it on the table. Then he knelt down there in that room which had witnessed such sublime devotion as the two women had manifested, such noble sacrifice as both had exhibited—and for him—and thanked God that he was alive and that he had known them both. He prayed that one might find happiness and that he might find the other. He would be happiness enough for that other now. For his eyes were opened and he knew that he loved Ariadne—only and forever, Ariadne. Then he went forth and delivered himself to the provost marshal smilingly.

CHAPTER XVII

KATHLEEN REAPS WHERE SHE HAD NOT SOWN

KATHLEEN MANNING met her husband in Washington with a curious mixture of feelings. There was first of all relief in her heart that she could meet him with such complacency, not to say pleasure. In the journey southward she had finally resolved on her course. She had determined to tell him the exact state of affairs between herself and Grafton, and let him be the judge of what should be done in the future. She realised that things could not go on as they had without some explanation. But the telling did not seem quite so easy and simple a matter when the big, bronzed, full-bearded, grey-eyed soldier gathered her in his arms with a great bear-like hug, causing the colour to flash into the cheek which had paled so suddenly at the sight of him.

He was unfeignedly rejoiced to see her. His deep and honest love was so obvious that even the travellers at the railroad station—who were familiar with such meetings, for there were many during those times and nobody minded spectators at all—could see how this brave soldier adored his handsome wife. Kathleen had always liked Manning. If she had not reciprocated his feelings, she had heretofore endured his caresses without any especial aversion at least, but after Grafton had been brought to her again the thought that she was another man's wife had grown suddenly horrible to her. She had fought against that feeling during Grafton's convalescence, and she was pleased now to find that she had mastered it.

No woman could fail to be pleased at being so welcomed, and to her surprise she found herself returning her husband's kisses. Kathleen was impulsive, wayward, passionate, and high-tempered. At the bottom, however, she was profoundly true to her womanhood. The course of self-discipline which she had forced upon herself during the past month had greatly developed her character. Altogether, although she had not dreamed of it, her heart was turning to George Manning—her husband.

There was another cause for such a turning which perhaps accounted for some of the vacillations and tempestuous outbreaks of her erratic nature. A cause which she had discussed with no one, which she had hardly admitted to herself. But before anything else she must tell her husband that.

In the room of the hotel when Manning would have taken her on his knee she bade him wait. She could not sit down, even on a chair, until she told him all. There was some of the spirit of the soldier about this Pennsylvania woman, and as the interview promised to be a momentous one, she preferred to meet it as a soldier should, on her feet. First of all, there was that preliminary disclosure to be made. He should be the first one in all the world to hear that; it was his right.

"George," she said, a bright colour succeeding the paleness which anxiety, self-struggle and care had brought into her usually red cheeks, ". . . I . . . there is something I wish to tell you. I have to tell you about Philip Grafton and myself."

She marked with a quick twinge of pity Manning's face grow grave; the light and happiness that her arrival had brought there died out of it in a measure. He said nothing, however, and she went on.

“ But before we discuss that there is something you must know.”

There are things a woman can confess like a soldier; there are others that she must confess like a woman. Kathleen forgot the last requirement when she stood so boldly facing him. She stopped now and hid her face in her hands. An idea shot through her husband's mind. He looked at her keenly, meaningly. A smile chased away some of the gathering gloom. He stepped toward her and took her in his arms.

“ Kate,” he cried, “ is it so? ”

His wife nodded. She dropped her head on his shoulder and clung to him, glad of the support of his strong arms. At that moment she loved him. The first real thrill of genuine feeling she had ever experienced for him shot through her being. They were linked together by the most effectual tie that can bind a man and a woman. He whispered something in her ear. She nodded again.

“ My heavens, Kate! ” he exclaimed, “ why didn't you tell me before? ”

There was no mistaking his happiness and joy now. He turned up her face to his own and kissed the woman again and again. “ My dear Kate, my sweet wife, my own Kate,” he went on, over and over again.

“ Wait, wait! ” said the woman at last. “ There is something else I must tell you.”

“ Nothing else matters,” said the happy man; “ I don't wish to hear anything else after such news.”

“ But you must, you shall,” said his wife. She thrust him away from her.

“ George,” she said, “ did you know that I once loved Philip Grafton? ”

Manning thanked God for that qualifying adverb.

"I suspected it," he answered gravely. "But you don't love him now, do you? You couldn't after . . ." His eagerness was pathetic.

"I . . . I don't know," answered Kathleen bravely, although it was terribly hard to go on. She stopped her husband's exclamation. "Wait. Do not judge me," she cried quickly; "you see how . . . how honest I am to you or I wouldn't be here telling you this."

"Let me say a word, Kate," interposed her husband quietly. "I don't care what you have to tell me, I want to say right here that I suspected something of this; nevertheless I trusted Grafton to your honour and you to his. I am not sorry that I trusted you or him. I believed in both of you, I believe in you still. Now, go on."

It was a brave thing splendidly done, and the woman was thrilled. She thanked God that she had pursued her self-appointed course of action during the time she had spent with Grafton. Nothing that her husband could have said or done would have so pleaded for him as the magnanimity of that speech.

"You did well to trust us both," answered Kathleen proudly. "There was not a thing that he said, or I said, or that he did, or I did, that you could not have witnessed. But I am not here to speak of doings, but of my heart."

"Go on."

He was a soldier, and accustomed to desperate situations. He summoned his courage and waited for what was to come with all the fortitude he could muster.

"Philip and I were once engaged. We became engaged nearly a year before the war broke out. After he graduated he visited me on the farm. We quarreled about the South. I wanted him to stay in

the North, if he couldn't fight with us, not to fight against us. He refused and I drove him off."

"And you married me out of pique, or . . . ?" queried Manning bitterly.

"I always liked you, I respected you," said Kathleen, rather piteously, being thus suddenly put on the defensive.

"Thank you. Go on."

"I don't know what I thought. I can hardly describe the situation, but a few days after Philip was brought to me his wife came. You recall that he told you about her in a letter?"

"Was she there?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't he mention it?"

"He didn't know."

"Why didn't you?"

"I promised not to."

"I don't understand."

Kathleen found the explanation every moment growing more difficult than she had dreamed of. Yet she had to go on.

"You see," she faltered, "there was a locket I had given him . . . before. He still wore it. My picture was in it."

"But he is married."

"It was merely a marriage of convenience, it seems, to please his guardian. He married a little girl of sixteen—she was his wife only in name. He never loved her."

Poor Manning stared in anguish.

"But he will, I am sure of it," said his wife quickly, her heart full for the man who loved her so.

"I am not so much interested in him as in you," returned her husband.

"Well, then, Mrs. Grafton came there. She

found that I . . . that we . . . that Philip didn't love her. She surmised that he had loved me. She saw that locket . . . my picture . . . she nursed him with me until his consciousness returned . . . then she left him with me. She exacted a promise from me not to tell him she had been there. She said she would go out of his life, that he would never see her again. She trusted him to me, George; she knew that I . . . I had cared, but still she trusted me, as you did, and Grafton's honour."

"And how did you fulfil that double trust?" asked her husband sternly.

"Without failing," said Kathleen proudly. "I told Philip that I was married to you and . . . that I loved . . . you."

"That was a noble untruth."

"It wasn't true then, but I . . . I thought of your honour . . . of the child that is coming to us . . . and I pretended . . ."

"Was it hard?"

"Very hard at first. Impossible, but it grew easier, and to-day I am almost glad."

"Kathleen!"

"I had to tell you, George. I hope that life has much in store for you . . . for us . . . and I knew there must be truth at the beginning. What shall be done?"

"Kathleen," said Manning, "I suppose no man could hear his wife confess to him her affection for another man without his heart breaking, but I suppose you could no more help loving him than I can help loving you. If there was anything to forgive, I'd forgive it. If there was anything to say, I'd say it. There isn't anything I can do but keep on loving and honouring you. I can't help that. But I . . . I won't trouble you again. You will let me know when

. . . the little one . . . comes . . . and some day when you have forgotten the other and perhaps grow to care for me a little bit . . .” He paused, choking back his feeling, and went on more composedly. “You know there is always a chance in a war like this that you may get your freedom.”

“George,” cried his wife, “don’t say that! I do not wish any . . . freedom . . . that way.”

She came closer to him and put her arms around his neck and turned her face up toward him. But Manning turned away his head and kept her from him.

“I do not wish pity, Kathleen. I must have everything or nothing. Friendship will never satisfy me.”

“Do not repulse me now,” cried Kathleen. “Don’t you see that I . . . I . . . I don’t believe that is a story now!”

“Kathleen, you don’t mean it?”

“I do. You know from what I have said to-day that I won’t lie to you or deceive you. You’re worth a thousand like Philip Grafton. I was a blind fool. If you can ever forgive enough . . .”

“Kathleen, Kathleen!” cried the man, “is it true? It can’t be! Why, you came here with your heart full of another!”

“I didn’t,” she interrupted. “I didn’t give a thought to any one but you. I haven’t for days. Will you take me back into your heart?”

“You have never been out of it. You never shall be out of it,” he cried, lifting her up in her arms, and although she was not a small woman, she seemed little in his mighty grasp. “Now,” he laughed, as her arms clung about his neck, her head nestled on his shoulder, “I hold all my family in my arms. This has been a second wedding day for me. I was never so happy in all my life. I have won you, and have

won you from such a splendid fellow as Philip Grafton."

"You goose!" said Kathleen gaily yet tenderly, her natural buoyancy returning to her in the relief that had come to her in the knowledge that her love had at last gone where it should have gone long ago, "there isn't a man in the whole South that can hold a candle to you!"

And whether true or not, that was very important for Manning.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BOOK OF THE HEART

PHILIP GRAFTON had anticipated a speedy release. He had gone with the provost guard that day at the farm with the confident hope of being soon in the South again; but Grafton, although he was a very important personage to certain individuals in this story, was but a small piece on the great chessboard. Merely a sergeant in the Virginia line—he was passed over again and again until he grew sick with hope deferred.

A consuming anxiety filled his mind to learn something of Ariadne. Blessings—it is a trite phrase—brighten as they take their flight. Grafton discovered it to be painfully true. He found himself longing for his wife as he had never in all his life longed for anything before.

When Ariadne had been pouring out her wealth of affection upon him he had—no, he had not disdained it—but he had been indifferent to it! Now that her love was withheld, now that she had ceased to be dependent upon him, now that she had gone away, there was nothing he so longed for as a sight of her face, a touch of her hand, a kiss from her lips. It was appalling to think of her away from him, suffering from a broken heart, a mere child, alone perhaps among strangers.

No woman who loves a man ever goes away from him without hope of pursuit, thought Grafton. He was sure that she loved him still. She could not change in that particular. She must be awaiting him,

then. What must she think of him, therefore? Did she believe that he had tamely accepted her decision? Could she think for a moment that he would allow her, his lawful wife—how he thrilled at the thought of that—to separate herself from him, to go away and leave him, to live her life alone? Yet what else could she think? His impatience was maddening.

Leave her, never! Not when he had a mind to think and plan and a body to execute should that be. He would have Ariadne. He would tell her that Kathleen Kirkwood cared nothing for him, that she had confessed to him that she loved her husband—which was as it should be—and that he, Philip Grafton, was glad of it. He would declare to her that while he should ever hold the Northern woman in gracious and tender memory, he would make it his life-task to bring happiness to Ariadne. If he didn't love her, he said, he would devote himself to her and persuade her that he did, and that would be easy. He tried to persuade himself, too, that all his thoughts and anxiety were for his wife, and not for himself; that he wanted to find her for her sake and not for his own. Oh, fool and blind!

Many a man stands in the full blaze of the morning sun and yet fancies himself in darkness; many a soul is awake while it yet dreams itself immersed in slumber. Philip, more from habit than anything else, clung to that idle fancy that Kathleen was still in his heart. Really he was already overwhelmingly in love with Ariadne, his wife—and did not know it. All he needed was to sustain a shock to clarify his thoughts, a re-agent to precipitate his affections. One sight of his wife would do that.

He did not sentimentalise much, either. As the days of his captivity grew longer he grew more and more anxious and more and more resolute. But it

was not until five weary months had dragged away on leaden feet, each with an added quota of trouble and suspense to Grafton, that the welcome exchange was effected. It was in January when he landed in Richmond again. Reporting his arrival, as he was in duty bound to do, to the Commissioner of Exchanges, he at once sought and obtained immediate leave to visit his home.

He was not strong. Prison life and prison fare were not conducive to health at best, and when a man had previously suffered from terrible wounds and was a prey to the most consuming mental anxiety, he did not recuperate under such conditions. Grafton therefore was in a wretched physical condition. His walk home was a long one and thoroughly tired him, but the last two blocks he passed on a run. At last he turned the corner and saw the house among the trees. There, where the magnolias, bloomless now, arched over the gate at which she stood when the regiment had marched off to war, he had hoped that she might be standing at that moment; as if some telepathic word of the heart could have informed her that he was coming to her, and she would come to meet him.

There was a sudden awakening from any such idle dream when he stepped on the porch and saw that the house was tightly closed. He walked rapidly around it, observing that every blind was drawn, every window shuttered and every door locked. After trying all the doors, in his disappointment he beat upon them with his fists. The noise of his blows came back in empty echoes. His wife was not there; no one was there. His kinswoman, Mrs. Galloway, who kept the house for him, must have gone, too. There was not even a servant about the place. Then he began to realise what he had before refused to acknowledge, that Ariadne had already carried out her

resolution, and that a long search was before him before he could appear in that magnanimous part in which he fancied himself, when he had thought upon the matter, in prison.

Just how to begin that search he did not know. Where she could have gone he could not imagine. Vallewis and Braeside both occurred to him, but both had been destroyed during McClellan's campaign, and Vallewis did not belong to Ariadne. He was sure she had no other property. He sat down on the porch in great weariness of body and faintness of heart. This was such a disappointing home-coming. On the few times when he had visited his wife she had always received him with such a glad light in her eyes that he seemed to be sitting in thick darkness now that she was away. Where had Mrs. Galloway gone? It was incredible that Ariadne could have taken her on some wild flight through the South? Grafton did not know what to do. Help came to him presently, however.

The women of a neighbouring house had seen a ragged soldier cross the lawn—common sight enough. When they had looked again they noticed that he was sitting on the porch, his head in his hands, in deep dejection. They realised then that this was no ordinary visitor or messenger, and one of them left the house and crossed the lawn toward him to find out what was the matter and to see if anything could be done for him. A returned Confederate soldier in trouble was always an object of attention to the people of Richmond in those days. A woman's voice broke the silence of his wretched reverie.

"Is there anything I can do for you, sir? I noticed you sitting here and . . ."

"Madam," said Grafton, rising, "can you tell me anything about the people of this house?"

"Haven't you heard?" asked the woman, who was very young and very pretty.

"I have heard nothing. I was wounded at Gettysburg and have been a prisoner in the North until to-day. My name is Grafton."

"Mr. Grafton," said the woman, smiling, "I am Mrs. George Pickett, the wife of your commander."

"I am honoured in meeting you as he is honoured in the relationship," answered Grafton, amazed at the youth of his beloved general's wife.

"Nay, I am honoured," said the young woman, who was scarcely more than a girl herself, "and I am always glad to meet one of my husband's brave men."

She stretched out her hand and Grafton took it, bending low over it.

"Can you tell me . . . forgive my importunity, but I have not heard a word from my wife since that battle. She lived here . . ."

"I have met her," said Mrs. Pickett gravely, "and Mrs. Galloway also. Mrs. Galloway is dead. She died of fever contracted in the hospitals some four months ago."

"And . . . my wife?" questioned Grafton, fearful that he should hear like tidings of her. At another time he would have given more thought to the death of his kinswoman and friend, but now he could think only of Ariadne.

"Was very well when I saw her last," quickly replied Mrs. Pickett, noticing the agony in the man's face. "The Dyletts . . . with whom I am staying . . . have the key of the house in their possession. Mrs. Grafton gave it to them when she left. They told me she had arrived from the North, where she had been endeavouring to find her husband . . . didn't you see her?"—Grafton shook his head—

"just before Mrs. Galloway's death. She and her two servants left immediately after the funeral."

"Where did they go?"

"I don't know. Perhaps Mrs. Oakley can tell you more. You know Mamie Dylett married John Oakley . . ."

"He fell at my side at Gettysburg," said Grafton; "I believe I must have been in command of the regiment when we crossed the stone wall, though only a sergeant."

"Come over and tell Mrs. Oakley about her husband and she will give you the key. If she cannot tell you, perhaps you can find something to indicate where your wife has gone in the house."

Grafton was burning to go into the house at once, but there was a duty he could not shirk. He followed Mrs. Pickett across the yard and told the meagre tale to the young woman who mourned the loss of her gallant husband. Mrs. Oakley could add nothing to Mrs. Pickett's account. She gave him the key to the house, which his wife had directed was to be given to no one but him, and bade him godspeed in his quest.

There is something depressing in a lonely house at any time. It is more depressing when the loneliness is unexpected. Grafton had hard work to keep himself from breaking down as he entered. Everything was just as it had been left, in beautiful order, although covered with that impalpable dust which not even the tightest closure can keep out. After one glance along the hall Grafton hurriedly ran upstairs and opened the door of his wife's apartments.

They were stripped bare. The book shelves were empty, the pictures were gone; even the piano had been taken away; there was nothing left. He crossed the room, his footfall on the uncarpeted floor making

a painful echo in his heart, to her bed-chamber, that virginal white chamber that had made so sweet a nest for his child-wife. It was empty, like the other room. No, there was a little table near the shuttered window. On it lay a small blank book. A piece of paper was thrust between its leaves. As he picked up the book the paper fluttered to the floor. He stooped for it and read these words:

“For Philip, my husband, when he comes back. Farewell.”

He opened the book. It was a daily record of Ariadne's thoughts and feelings. It began the day he left for the war. It ended, abruptly, the day she had received the news that he was among the missing after that fatal charge. Evidently when she had returned after the visitation to that Pennsylvania farm she had not thought it necessary to go on with anything more. Nor was it. She had written enough. He had thought that he had known her heart, but this was a revelation such as it is vouchsafed few men to see. It was all about him. There was nothing but her husband and her love for him on every page. That was her life, that had been her life until—what was her life now?

Grafton read and read. His had been the treasure of that affection so rich, so full, and so tender; blind, he had never appreciated it. It had never moved him. Now it was gone from him.

He closed the book. He kissed it softly again and again. He lifted it to heaven and swore that he would find her and tell her that he loved her. That he loved her only, that he had never loved but her. He knew it now. His other passion had been as moonlight unto sunlight compared to this. He would find her although the North and the South should unite to keep him from her.

There was not the slightest indication where she had gone, no word, no trace. There was no clue in the whole house, although Grafton made a complete search from top to bottom. There was nothing but that journal, speaking to him like a voice from the dead. Never mind, he would find her. God did not intend to keep two who so loved each other apart. He would find her wherever she was. He would live to tell her that he loved her.

He was standing in the hallway when he heard a footstep on the porch. He turned to meet an officer, a disabled invalid soldier who was acting as a commissioner for the War Department. Grafton's exchange and arrival had been reported. The soldier bore orders for him.

"Are you Sergeant Philip Grafton of the Ninth Virginia?"

"I am."

"I am Captain Lacy, temporarily attached to the War Department on account of this"—he held up an armless sleeve. "I was in the North Carolina brigade that charged up Cemetery Ridge with you fellows."

The two men clasped hands instantly.

"It was a great fight, wasn't it?" said Lacy, smiling.

"Magnificent!" answered Grafton sombrely.

"I am glad I was in it even if I did lose an arm."

"So am I," assented Grafton—"although it is like to have cost me a wife," his thoughts ran. He said nothing of this aloud, however, as Lacy continued:

"The story has been told of how you led your men, the ranking officer of the regiment, at the last, and fell beside Armistead on the crest of the hill. Some influence has been brought to bear and you have been

appointed a lieutenant and attached to General Lee's staff."

"I can't accept it!" said Grafton abruptly.

"What!" exclaimed Lacy, in astonishment. "Why, man, there isn't a soldier in the army that wouldn't give his head for such a chance. What's the matter with you?"

"I . . . I . . ."

"Besides," continued the young officer, "you know that Grant's been put in command of the Army of the Potomac, and he means business. We are enlisting all the men we can get hold of. 'Robbing the cradle and the grave,' the Yankees say. By Heaven, we need them. Grant's got a hundred and fifty to two hundred thousand men confronting 'Lee's Misérables'"—the most popular book in the Confederacy in that time was Hugo's "Les Misérables." The soldiers called themselves after that title in grim jest, which was full of bitter truth, nevertheless—"and every man, old and young, is being pressed into the service. If they want more we'll have to call in the women. You can't refuse."

"I was wrong; of course, I'll go," said Grafton. "You see my wife . . . is gone . . . I don't know where she is. But a man's duty now . . . his first duty . . . is to his country."

"I am glad you see it that way," said Lacy earnestly; "here is your commission. Here are the transportation orders, and if you will apply at the department you can get advance pay, such as it is, and arrange a uniform of some kind. Have you a horse?"

"I can get one."

"Well, it will cost you a thousand dollars in our money now."

"I still have a little gold in the bank, enough for

my needs. Thank you. Give me the orders. Say to Secretary Seddon that I thank him and that I will report to General Lee at once."

"The quicker the better. Advices from the front say that Grant is expected to cross the Rapidan any day and you won't want to miss it. Jove, I envy you. I wish I had your chance."

"My friend," said Grafton gravely, "there isn't a man in the army who need envy me my present situation." He shook his head, turned away and walked back into the house.

"He's hard hit," said Lacy. "Seems to me I've heard something about the girl he married . . . only a child. I wonder where she has gone. Yes, this war is hell, as that bloody marauder, Sherman, says. But I wish I could get back into it, arm or no arm!"

BOOK FOUR

Ariadne

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE WILDERNESS

SPRING days and flower time in Virginia in 1864. The asphodel meadows of the dead were thick with the crimsoned amaranthine blossoms that spring from heroic human hearts. The grey and the blue had been fighting again in the wilderness. May had been ushered in by a confused battle of incredible fierceness in the impenetrable thickets of the virgin woods south of the Rapidan. For two long and weary days the armies had blindly grappled with each other.

There had been headlong charges and counter-charges, success and failure in the gloom of the forest primeval. The great contest had finally degenerated into a series of hand-to-hand struggles between companies, regiments, brigades, divisions. The generals lost touch with their men in the tangles of the trackless depths. Only by the fitful roaring of musketry, or artillery outbursting suddenly here and there along the far-flung lines, were the leaders able to keep track of the writhing battle. Men stumbling through the pathless woodland met others in the shadowy twilight of the leaves and fired face to face. Men crashed through the underbrush and fought breast to breast. Each forest glade was red with blood and filled with slain. The suspense and incertitude were something horrible. To struggle on, to fight, to die without order, plan or purpose—such was the battle.

The heat was something terrific. There had been little rain for a long time. The woods set on fire by shells were soon blazing in every direction. Men

charged over flaming breastworks. The impartial fire fought both sides indifferently and finally tore the combatants from each other's throats and compelled a pause. The helpless wounded were necessarily left to be burned alive, to perish miserably in the flames.

The advantage, if advantage there was, was on the side of Lee. Grant had crossed the Rapidan in that final campaign which had Richmond as its objective. Lee had not waited to be assaulted, but with brilliant courage and soldierly decision had attacked him when his army was entangled in the wilderness. The loss had fallen on the greater, and the few had held the many back. Both sides had suffered terribly, and during the 7th of May both paused for a breathing space, if it could be got in that acrid smoke-laden air, to determine the next move.

Grafton had been with General Lee for three months now. Such had been his efficiency that he had been promoted to the rank of captain. He was one of the great general's most trusted aides. A most valuable officer he was on account of his close study of the intricacies of the law, his college training, his long experience in actual war, and his absolute devotion to his duty, a devotion which the general himself knew how to measure, for Grafton had taken advantage of the first opportunity frankly to confide in his chief—to whom the humblest soldier had access with his complaints, by the way—the story of his lost wife and his misfortunes. Indeed, Lee had naturally asked for Mrs. Grafton when first he had welcomed the young subaltern to his military family. Grafton had confessed all to him with entire unreserve, and the general had encouragingly held out hopes to the young officer that some day he would find his wife. Meanwhile he honoured him for putting aside his grief and the terrible demands her

continued absence made upon him, to serve his country.

On the morning of the 7th of May Grafton had been despatched with an order to Stuart, commanding the cavalry then skirmishing on the far left and rear of the Union army. He returned about noon with grave tidings. As he galloped to headquarters on the edge of the Widow Tapp's farm he saw a few small tents, very much tattered, with little to distinguish them from those of any other general officer, pitched under the shade of some trees near a running stream. A sentry paced up and down. To one side the horses were tethered by a single battered wagon.* Back of the camp a fire was blaz-

* "When we marched to meet Grant in the Wilderness, in the spring of 1864, we were about the most destitute army that ever marched to meet anybody, anywhere. We had nothing to transport, and we had no transportation.

At the beginning of every campaign it is customary for the commanding general to issue an order, setting forth the allotment of baggage wagons to officers and men. Just before we marched that spring some wag in the army had printed and circulated a mock order from General Lee, a copy of which now lies before me.

GENERAL ORDERS, NUMBER I

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA,

April 20, 1864.

The allotment of baggage wagons to the officers and men of the Army of Northern Virginia during the coming campaign will be as follows:

To every thirty officers. No baggage wagon

To every three hundred men. Ditto

(Signed) ROBERT E. LEE, General.

This order was a good-natured forgery, of course. Nevertheless it was carried out to the letter. The fact is that we had no baggage and no baggage wagons. . . . We entered that campaign stripped almost to the buff. We had no tents, even for the highest officers. We had no canteens. We had no haversacks. We had no knapsacks. We had no oilcloths to sleep on. We had no tin cups. We had almost no cooking utensils and almost no blankets. We had no shoes, and our socks had long ago been worn out. We had an average of no overcoat to every thousand men."

This note is taken from George Cary Eggleston's charming book, "Southern Soldier Stories."

ing cheerfully, and the negro cook was preparing dinner. Couriers were coming and going, and the scene was a busy one. Grafton had ridden practically all morning, having taken a roundabout course to avoid any Federal cavalry, and he was both tired and hungry. His message was one of great importance, however, and claimed precedence over his appetite. Disregarding invitations to partake of the army's frugal fare that had been urged upon him as he rode through the headquarters guard, he dismounted from his horse, gave the reins to an orderly, and pushed through the crowd of officers to seek the commanding general.

Lee sat on a log under a tree in front of his tent, somewhat removed from the people who made up his staff and escort. He was older now than when he had ridden away from Arlington on that spring day four years before. The strain of the greatest responsibility that had heretofore been borne by an American soldier had told upon him. His dark hair had become very grey. His beard, which was greyer, had been allowed to grow in the field. He looked a much older man, but his eyes were bright and his ruddy face was composed and dignified. Dinner was being served him as Grafton drew near. The general's camp equipage was of the very simplest. His plate and all his service was of the plainest tin, dented and battered from hard usage, but shining as brightly as the sturdy arms of the general's cook could polish it.

Bacon, potatoes, crackers and a demijohn composed the menu. Alas, for the hopes of those to whom a demijohn held forth specious promise of strong drink, meet for soldiers! This vessel contained nothing but buttermilk, of which the general was very fond. He drank no wine or other liquor

on the field, and but little out of it. The feast was a sumptuous one with such a combination. Sometimes—but infrequently—there was bacon, generally potatoes, hard bread and water. Coffee was a rarity, and the general did not care for chicory. Lee nodded pleasantly to the approaching officer, called to his boy to bring an extra tin plate and bade him sit down and partake.

“I have a message from General Stuart, sir,” began Grafton, as he obeyed.

“Good!” exclaimed the general, who had been anxiously awaiting word from the eyes of the army, the cavalry.

“He says that the Federal army is preparing to move by its left flank in an attempt to turn our right again. He thinks Grant will endeavour to elude you to-night. He wishes instructions. He ventures to suggest that possibly a dash at the Federal communications would be of some service to you.”

Lee shook his head.

“It was a dash at the Federal communications that perhaps lost us Gettysburg,” he said quietly. “I shall have other use for General Stuart’s men. Where is he located, sir?”

“On the Brook Road near Todd’s Farm.”

“Has he his whole force in hand?”

“I believe so, sir. He has been skirmishing with Federal cavalry yesterday and to-day.”

“Whose division is in advance?”

“General Fitz Lee’s, sir.”

“Good,” said the general reflectively. “Grant has tried our lines unavailingly. He knows what he can do and what he can’t.” He paused and a little smile of satisfaction overspread his face at the fact that, in the first encounter with the genius from the West, who was to do what no other com-

mander of the Army of the Potomac had ever done, defeat him, he had gained the advantage. "Naturally, since Richmond is his probable objective," resumed the general at last, "he will endeavour to interpose his army between us and the capital. He can only go around our left flank. Stuart is correct. We must stop him at once. Colonel Taylor!" he called out. A young officer came forward, saluted his chief, and nodded familiarly to Grafton. "Will you hand me the map of Spottsylvania County?"

In a moment Taylor placed the map in the general's hand. Laying aside his tin plate, Lee pored over it intently for a few moments.

"Spottsylvania Court House," he said at last, "will be our next meeting point." His mouth closed firmly and he looked thoughtfully out toward the smoking, smouldering forest, where he had just fought one of his greatest battles. "Captain Grafton," he continued formally, after a little pause, "when you have finished your dinner . . ."

"It comes near being breakfast as well, General," said the young man, smiling. "But I am ready now, sir." He had been eating with the rapidity of a busy soldier since he sat down.

"Wait," said Lee; "you have had time but for little. I shall wish you to take another long ride presently. A good soldier always looks well to his commissariat when he has a chance. Eat all you can now. I don't know when you'll get much more," he continued, picking up his own plate and falling to again. He talked to Grafton as he ate. "Those people"—which was almost his invariable method of referring to the enemy—"will try to move down the Brock Road from Todd's Tavern to the Court House. Some of them will come down the Piney

Branch Road to Alsop's. They have a little the advantage of us in the point of distance, but there are no better marchers in the whole world than our bare-foot soldiers. We have a very good road that crosses the Po here." He pointed with his fork to the map. "We'll get to Spottsylvania by way of Shady Grove Church, crossing the Po again there. Do you know anything about the bridges?"

"I have just come over the road and they are intact, or were this morning."

"Good!" returned Lee. "Is the road practicable for troops?"

"I think so, sir. It's terribly dusty, but we can certainly get through."

"We must get through!" said the general impressively. "For should Grant succeed in turning our left . . . well, we won't consider that. We can't allow him to do it. Tell General Stuart he must take position on the Brock Road at Todd's Tavern or south of it. He must send one division, Hampton's, to Shady Grove Church Road via Talley's. When he gets in position he must dismount his men, put them behind such works as he can manage, and hold the enemy at all hazards . . . at all hazards, sir!" he repeated emphatically. Grafton nodded to show that he understood, and Lee continued, "Tell him that I will put Longstreet's corps in motion immediately and either cross to him by the Catharpin Road and join him at the tavern, or if the Federal troops have reached there before us, we shall continue down the Shady Grove Road and move north to the Brock Road at Wait's or Perry's. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir, perfectly."

"Impress upon General Stuart that the Federal advance must be checked! He must give me time

to get in front of Grant. I shall depend on him. It means the salvation of this army."

"He'll do it, sir," answered Grafton confidently, "although his boys don't care to do much fighting on foot."

"It's the only possible way by which my plans can be carried out," said Lee earnestly. "General Grant will undoubtedly cover his advance with cavalry, and while I have no doubt Stuart could whip them, yet after a fight with them he would be in no condition to withstand their infantry supports. He must move his horses to the rear and fight behind breastworks. It will be a hard enough task as it is to hold back those people with his slender line of dismounted cavalry. You fully appreciate the importance of the message, Captain?"

"I do, sir," said Grafton, rising as Lee rose to his feet.

"You will allow nothing to prevent its delivery?"

"Nothing, sir."

"I think you have a free road if you start now. Except for stray bodies of scouts, I do not believe any of those people will be met with on our left. I shall depend upon you to let Stuart know. Perhaps I would better send a second messenger."

"It will not be necessary, sir," said the young man. "I came safely through this morning, and I am sure I can go back now."

"You will try the Catharpin Road to Todd's Tavern?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well. Stuart has his artillery with him?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good! I shall expect to hear the sound of his guns late in the evening, if not before. When can you start?"

"I am ready to go now, sir."

"Very well. I shall not give you any written orders. Stuart knows you are on my staff, and the situation is so simple that a word or two will make him see it as I do. Good-bye."

Grafton saluted and turned away. Lee summoned Colonel Taylor, talked with him a moment explaining his purpose, orders were hastily prepared, and in a short time couriers were riding in different directions carrying the orders to the different corps commanders for the immediate movement of the army from Grant's front to his left. The race for Spottsylvania Court House was begun.

CHAPTER XX

A FORGOTTEN DUTY

GRAFTON'S horse had been refreshed by the brief rest and as generous a provision of forage as any of the horses in that army ever received then, which was very little. The animal was, of course, not in the best condition and had been ridden rather hard during the morning, but Grafton was a consummate horseman. He knew how to get the most out of anything he rode without wearing it away, or fretting it to death, and there was still plenty of speed in the gallant animal he bestrode.

It was about two when he left headquarters and moved off. He cantered down the narrow, wretched road, making as good speed as possible until he struck a better way after he crossed Orange Plank Road. No adventure of any sort befell him as he galloped along. He met few people, and those mostly small farmers, men too old for the ranks, who were hurrying the women and children south to get them out of the track of the wrestling armies.

Grafton had plenty of leisure to indulge his thoughts, therefore. As always when alone, and even when he was in the company of the others, provided they made no demand upon his attention, those thoughts were of Ariadne. He had been most assiduous in his search for her since his exchange, through such agents as he could employ. His own duties did not permit him a day's leisure for the purpose, but by letters and other means which he could

command he had kept persistently looking for her—but with absolutely no success at all. There was something that was hopeful in the absence of any tidings, he thought, for he believed that silence indicated that she was alive and well. He trusted that if anything serious were to befall her, or even threaten her, her love for him, which he knew now nothing could ever alter, would move her to send him word. He watched every mail that reached headquarters with a fervid expectancy and a hope that no disappointment could ever entirely quench. No tidings ever came. As he galloped along the open road he wondered and wondered where she could be.

He was thankful to note that the character of the country had changed. The armies moving south would soon be out of the wilderness. The forests had been cleared away in places and the land was dotted with smiling farms. The little houses were for the most part empty, but the crops had been put in and were already showing well above the ground. The farmers had fled, but when Lee had succeeded in defeating Grant, as he had defeated every other Union commander who had tried to move south, they would come back again and reap where they had sowed. That Lee would succeed in foiling and repelling his great antagonist, Grafton did not for a second doubt. That Lee could ever be beaten, that the Southern Confederacy, even though it was now in such desperate straits, could ultimately fail, was not a possible article in any Southern soldier's creed.

Always after a great battle in which the Army of the Potomac had been checked or defeated, there had been a long cessation of active hostilities. Grant, so the young man reflected, seemed to be made of sterner stuff than the others. He had been defeated

and had lost terribly in his assaults upon the Confederate lines; and, according to the hitherto invariable practice of the Union commanders, he should now be moving back across the Rapidan to recuperate and reorganise before trying again, but it seemed that he had not yet had enough of it! Well, the next battle would probably satisfy him, and then, well, then perhaps Grafton might get leave of absence and go to seek her.

Where could she be? So he rode along through the hot spring afternoon until he reached the Catharpin Road. Now it was just possible that the Federal troops had seized Todd's Tavern in force and that Stuart had fallen back. If that were the case, the Catharpin Road would not be a safe turning for him. He had no means of determining the matter, however, so he turned his horse to the northeastward and rapidly galloped on toward the tavern, perhaps two miles away. If he could get through that way, he could save a long and costly detour and a corresponding delay. He kept a sharp lookout and at every turning of the road he stopped, cautiously examining in front of him before he advanced further.

He met nothing, however, until he was within perhaps three-quarters of a mile from the tavern. The road there ran through a thick grove of trees and underbrush. Off to the left a small neighbourhood road branched from the highway and meandered through the trees until it was lost in a sudden turn in the forest. He stopped and looked up it carefully. He saw and heard nothing. A search of the road in front revealed no one. He gathered up the reins and spoke to his horse, when the sound of a woman's scream broke the silence. It came to him faintly from some distance away. It was a shriek fraught with terror, and it touched him profoundly.

His natural instinct was to turn to the branch road and see what was the matter, but it was a case where natural instinct had to give way before military exigency. The message to Stuart was vital. He could not play the wandering knight to distressed women, however great the peril, and thus jeopard the coming battle by failing to carry the order with the delivery of which he was charged. Yet he hesitated when the scream broke on his ears, and he remained a moment irresolute. He heard the wild cry again. It appealed to him most powerfully. On the outskirts of every army there were certain masterless men of the basest sort, who ravaged and plundered indiscriminately, who would not stop at robbery, or murder—or even worse.

There was a woman in trouble. Some of those fiends had her. She was fighting for what was dearer than life. What horrors war brought upon those who could not enlist in the ranks and who were called, in mockery, non-combatants—old men, mothers, women, children! God, it was horrible! The sweat beaded on his brow, yet with an aching heart he turned and spoke to his horse. A black figure, tattered and torn, burst through the bushes at that moment. It was an old negro, white-haired, his face ashy under its pigment.

“Fer Gawd’s sake, suh!” he cried, lifting his hands as he saw the horseman, “dey got my young mistis dar an’ dey . . . fer de lub er heabin’, hit’s Marse Phill!”

“Aza!” cried Grafton. “What are you doing here?”

“Dem Yanks, dey got Miss ’Adny. Ef you doan . . .”

Philip heard no more. Those screams came from the lips of his wife; she it was who—it was more

than flesh and blood could stand. He turned, forgetful of everything but that she was in deadly peril. He drove the spurs until the blood-stained rowels sank deep into the flanks of his astonished horse. Sudden as a released arrow from its bow the horse leaped into the air and was away. Grafton loosened his revolver from its holster as he ran. Two minutes that seemed hours brought him to a little sequestered clearing. A small white house, a story and a half high, nestled among the trees. Flowers bloomed around the porch. A little garden lay off to the left. On the porch a woman was struggling desperately in the arms of three men. Half a dozen others were congregated at the foot of the steps watching the scene, laughing, yelling in brutal and vulgar triumph. Others were ransacking some of the outbuildings further away.

Their uniforms, so far as they wore any, were blue. All told there might have been a score of them. But Grafton did not stop for that. His advent was a complete surprise. He was upon them like a storm. The pistol cracked in his nervous hands. Once, twice, thrice, and each time a man fell. The startled survivors started to run. One man on the porch released the woman, who redoubled her efforts to escape, and turned and drew his pistol, firing in return. The bullet grazed Grafton and struck his horse vitally. The poor beast stopped, faltered and fell. He had been hard hit and was done for. Grafton luckily disengaged himself as he went down and shot the man before he could pull the trigger again. He drew his sword and rushed at the remaining man on the porch. A slightly wounded man at the steps, who had seized his gun, rashly interposed. Grafton swept him out of his path with a terrific blow of his sabre. He had one load left in his pistol. He shot

the foremost man on the porch and made at the last with the point of his sword upwards.

This man snapped his pistol full in the furious Confederate's face. The bullet grazed his cheek. It staggered him for a moment, but he still came on, whereupon the remaining ruffian turned, darted through the house, and sought safety in the wood beyond. Half a dozen dead and dying men lay groaning and cursing in the yard. No enemy faced the excited soldier for the moment. He could have swept an army out of his path to get to Ariadne. He dropped his sword and stretched out his hands to his wife, standing so straight, so dauntless, before him. With pale face she stared at him where the blood trickled across his cheek.

"Philip!" she cried. She had not recognised him till then.

She made a beautiful picture in spite of her disarranged clothing, caused by her struggle with the rough men.

"Thank God, I have found you!" answered her husband, oblivious to every thought but that at first, "that I have come in time to save you!"

"You are hurt, beloved!" cried Ariadne, moving toward him as one in a dream.

"It's nothing," said her husband, wiping the blood away with his hand. "A bullet in my heart couldn't hurt now that I have found you. Oh, if you only knew how I have . . ."

A musket shot rang through the air. Grafton acted promptly. He realised instantly that some of the men, who had fled before his onslaught, seeing that he was alone and knowing that he was practically weaponless, had rallied, and led by him who had passed through the house, had renewed the attack. He seized Ariadne, who still stared at him as if in

a daze, by the arm and whirled her into the house. He flung to the door and locked it.

"Have you a weapon?" he cried.

"Upstairs," she answered, "in my room. I keep it there."

"Which way?"

"Here."

She opened the door. He drew her into the stairway and urged her up. Together they entered her chamber, a half-story room, under the long roof, with dormer window, furnished in that same virginal white that he had seen so long ago in Richmond. She ran to a bureau drawer, and, opening it, produced a small but serviceable revolver, useful in close quarters. He looked rapidly about him as she did so. The windows gave on the forest. The men outside could easily shoot into the room. At that instant a bullet crashed through the sash, passed between the heads of the two young people, and buried itself in the opposite ceiling.

"Down!" cried Grafton, taking his wife and fairly forcing her to her knees. He took position beside her where he could see with a minimum of danger while she was entirely protected.

"We're in a tight place," he whispered; "I don't know whether we'll get out of it alive or not. I have only one thing to say. You are mistaken; I loved you alone."

"And Kathleen?"

"That was a boyish infatuation. I care nothing for her. I never did." Oh, Philip, Philip! Yet he believed it!—"I love only you."

Another bullet zipped through the window. Philip raised his pistol quickly and fired at the place whence the shot had come in the underbrush. Yells of pain answered his shot.

"I got one, I guess. That'll make them more cautious," he continued. "My heart broke when I found that you had been there and left me." Some one ran across the open yard and Philip fired again. "Missed!" he said in great disappointment.

There was a sound of footsteps on the porch, and presently the little house shook and rocked as if something heavy and solid was hurled against the door.

"What is that?" cried Ariadne, who really didn't much care what it was. Philip had found her, he had come back to her—and he loved her! Nothing could matter after that.

"They have gained the porch and are breaking the door in," he said.

"What will they do next?"

"Try to rush the stairs."

"And then?"

"Some of them will die before they get up," he responded grimly.

"Save one shot for me, Philip, and a kiss," said his wife. "Those men were going to . . ."

"They shall never lay hands on you again, dear," said Philip savagely.

He stepped over to the door, stood before it in such a way as not to be visible from the window and after a moment's hesitation opened it. The stair was a blind one with a sharp turn half-way up. He wanted to see anybody coming that way. The marauders must have been reinforced, for they suddenly began a rapid fire at the window of the chamber, evidently to distract the inmates. But one of those inmates was a veteran soldier and the other was a woman, who had just found her lover's heart. They were not to be distracted by such things as gunshots then.

The bullets zipped and tore harmlessly through

the room. Ariadne had crept away from the window and now crouched down on the floor by Philip's side. She put out her hand and touched him standing there so resolute and ready. She wanted to lay her head at his feet; she thought she had never imagined him so brave, so handsome, so utterly magnificent! And he had not time to kiss her yet! Well, he would make time for that if he had to kill her and she would die content.

The fusillade outside was intended to cover the real attack, for Grafton heard a slight creak on the stair. He raised his pistol, and as a man followed a protruding musket-barrel around the angle, Grafton put a bullet in his head. Believing that he had expended his last shot, another man recklessly exposed himself, to meet a like fate. Philip had another life in his pistol, besides one shot for Ariadne, and he cried out in triumph and bade them come on.

But the musketry fire outside died away. A voice bade someone kindle a fire. It was evident that the besieged were to be burned out. That was a danger against which Philip could do nothing. He looked at Ariadne in dismay.

"I don't care," said the girl, noting his mute inquiry; "you have found me and you love me. Nothing else matters."

But life was very sweet to Philip at that moment. He had found his wife and he did not wish to die. He wished to live to love her and to enjoy her love. If he had to die, however, the time and place and company could not better be chosen. He hated to stay there and be burned to death like a rat in a trap. If he were alone he would make a dash for it, but, of course, he could not leave Ariadne. Why had Fate played him so sorry a trick as to lay him by the heels at the instant above all others when she had put her

greatest gift in his hand? He stood irresolute for a moment, when another sound broke on his ear. He heard the galloping of horses, the jingle of bits, sharp words of command. It was a soldierly voice: there was something in the ring that gave Grafton confidence. Whether Union or Confederate forces made no matter. Anything would be better than these guerrillas. Horsemen galloped into the yard. Recklessly exposing himself, Grafton leaned out of the window and shouted at the top of his voice.

"These ruffians are trying to outrage a woman!"

The bullets sang around him, but none hit him.

"I thought so," he heard a sharp voice say. "Lay down your arms, you infernal scoundrels; you disgrace the army!"

"What's that to you, damn you!" cried the voice of the man who had given the order to burn the house.

"Everything," retorted the other speaker. "If you don't surrender instantly, I will . . ."

The answer was a pistol shot, and the reply to that, delivered by the new arrivals without orders, was a volley. There was a sudden burst of firing, which presently died away.

"Come," said Grafton quickly; "they're fighting each other. Perhaps we can escape."

He seized Ariadne's hand and plunged down the stair over the dead bodies of the men he had shot, who still encumbered it. He turned to go out of the back door and found himself confronting half a dozen Union cavalymen.

"Is this the lady?" asked the young officer in advance.

"Yes, sir," said Grafton, "and I never was so glad to see a blue uniform before."

"Those cattle disgrace our ranks. They're not

enlisted, not amenable to any orders, under no discipline, cowards!"

"I understand exactly what they are, sir. War always brings such villains to the fore. And many of our own camp-followers are of the same vile breed."

"There will be a few less of them when I turn the rest of those hounds over to General Patrick, our provost marshal," returned the officer. "I trust the lady took no hurt?"

"Not yet," answered Grafton.

"I arrived just in time, then," said the Union officer. "Of course, you belong to the Confederate army, sir?"

"I do."

"Well, I must take you prisoner. I'm sorry to do it, but I have no option, of course."

The officer was right; he had no option. Nor had Grafton any way of escape. What had brought the Federal squadron down toward the Catharpin Road, he wondered? Stuart could not be at Todd's Tavern then. That message he was to deliver, upon which the fate of the armies hung—he had forgotten it until that moment! As it flashed into his mind with the consciousness that he was a helpless prisoner, for the second time that afternoon the sweat beaded his forehead. He could not get to Stuart now. Lee's army would be outflanked. He could do nothing, nothing! Something of his emotion was apparent in his face; the officer saw it.

"Too bad, sir," he said kindly, "but, of course, it can't be helped."

Ariadne saw it, too, and wondered. She stepped closer to her husband.

"I shall have to take you with me," continued the officer. "Your horse?"

"He was killed by those scoundrels."

"Well, I have a spare one here."

"Am I a prisoner also, sir?" asked Ariadne, a quick idea coming to her.

"Surely not, madam."

"This officer is my husband. We have not seen each other for over a year. Will you allow us to speak together for a few moments before you take him away?"

"Certainly," returned the gallant young officer. "The horses need water and we have been riding hard since daybreak. I'll give the men a little rest. You don't happen to know where the rest of your army is, I take it?" he asked, smiling.

"If I did, I wouldn't tell you," returned the Southerner gravely.

"Of course not. Well, you can have five minutes to say good-bye to your wife. Madam, a word of advice to you: you'd better get out of this neighbourhood as soon as possible. There's going to be fighting hereabouts and you may not be so lucky the next time."

CHAPTER XXI

A BRAVE MESSENGER

THE officer dismounted from his horse, and, turning him over to an orderly, withdrew a short distance from his prisoner. His men having disarmed and tightly bound the surviving guerrillas, also took advantage of the brief respite. The horses cropped the thick grass of the yard, the men threw themselves down under the trees, pipes were brought out and lighted, and one or two improved the shining hour by kindling fires. Soon the coffee—real coffee, since the Federal troops had plenty of it—was boiling. They had travelled far and were very tired. They were a detachment of Merritt's cavalry and had been sent scouting on this branch route to see if the Confederates were moving up the Catharpin Road or to discover if Lee were moving to the right. Before Grafton could exchange a word with Ariadne a huge black old negress waddled on the scene. In her wake, following meekly, as became his subordinate station, was her husband.

"Aunt Dessy!" cried Ariadne. "I'm so glad to see you. I thought perhaps you were killed."

"I dess lak to see dem Yankee scalawags lay a han' on me! Dis heah wufless nigger run lak a tarryfied rabbit an' lef me 'lone wid nobody."

"Wen I las' seed you you was a-mekin' time yo'-sef!" returned Aza angrily.

"Yas, but I was gwine todes de house an' you was gwine 'way 'fum hit! I was in de gyarden w'en dey cum, Miss 'Adny, or I'd been wid you."

"I know you were, Aunt Dessy."

"An' I was gwine fer re'nfo'cements," retorted the man. "I seed de Yanks was too many fer me, an' ef hit hadn't been fer me, wha'd you-all been? 'Case I fotched Marse Phil. I des know'd he was dar w'en I runned down to de big road. An' I fotched him."

"You fotched him!" cried Aunt Dessy contemptuously; "he was heah fer mos' a hour fo' you cum."

"I didn't had no horse," returned Aza, "but I was a-movin' des as fas' as my ol' roomatic laigs 'ud cyary me."

"You both did splendidly," said Ariadne; but Philip broke in impatiently.

"I want you to keep these men here a little while," he said under his breath to his wife. Ariadne nodded. She made a step toward the Union officer, who was surveying the scene with much amusement.

"Sir," she began, "I should like to show you some gratitude for my rescue. Won't you let my servants make some coffee for your men? . . . only you will have to furnish it; we have none, . . . but I think we have some corn bread and bacon which . . ."

"Which will be very welcome, madam," said the young officer. "And I thank you kindly."

"Dessy, you and Aza see what you can do," said Ariadne. "How many men have you, Captain?"

"I started out with forty-eight, but I've lost ten by the way."

"I hab de coffee bilin' in a jiffy, ef dey'll gib it to me," said Aunt Dessy. "You, Aza, go fotch de bacon an' de cohn meal. Cum 'long. Lemme see ef you kin move as quick as you was a-movin' w'en you was gwine fo' hep. I reckon I'd radder hab dat gait dan w'en you was a-comin' back."

The Union officer, after this development, walked over to his first sergeant. Thereafter two of the troopers mounted and galloped down the road to look out for a possible enemy and prevent a surprise. He was a prudent captain evidently, observed Grafton. The rest now unsaddled their horses and made preparations for a longer wait. Not only was the officer a good soldier, but he was a gentleman as well, for there was nothing on earth that could have prevented him from taking everything which the place afforded, if he had been so disposed. Most soldiers, even gentlemen, would not have scrupled to supply their hungry men under the circumstances, yet the fact that this Confederate officer had made so gallant a defence against the guerrillas and had appealed to him for protection rather put the Union officer on his mettle to show his quality. It was as if the Confederate had recognised in him a man of honour and had trusted to him, and he was anxious to prove that he was worthy. He was a kind-hearted fellow, anyway.

Then Ariadne's beauty, and her graciousness, also attracted him. He was altogether inclined to go to lengths in complaisance, which perhaps under other circumstances he would not have thought of. He left the two entirely alone, therefore, while the preparations for the repast were being made. He was very careful to keep them in sight, but that was all. So soon as he could do so Philip turned to Ariadne.

"Oh," she began, "I am so glad you have found me since . . ."

"Dearest," said her husband quickly, "I haven't time to talk of that now."

Ariadne flushed angrily and opened her mouth to speak.

"For God's sake, don't misunderstand me!" he

whispered; "you are the dearest thing on earth to me, but in riding here, in getting myself captured, I have jeopardized the safety of the army."

"And do you regret your action?"

"I regret nothing. Look as if we were talking indifferently, please. I had to do it, but the situation is a fearful one to me. It spells dishonour."

"Philip!"

"Unless you can help me."

"What is it you wish me to do?"

"So soon as these men have had their meal they will leave here. They will probably go further south, for they have learned nothing yet, and I shall be taken with them. The officer evidently does not mean to take you a prisoner. So soon as he is out of sight you must . . . have you a horse?"

"Bonnibel is hidden in the woods."

"Good! You must go up to Todd's Tavern . . . do you know where it is?"

"Certainly. I know every trail in this part of the country."

"It's more than I do," said Grafton.

"Go on, go on, quickly. We may not be left alone long."

"After you reach Todd's Tavern you must ride down the Brock Road . . . do you follow me?"

"Absolutely."

"Until you fall in with General Stuart's force."

"But I don't know General Stuart."

"That makes no difference. You must tell him you are my wife."

"Does he know you?"

"Very well. Tell him I delivered his message to General Lee at noon, that General Lee says he must on no account strike at the Federal communications, for which he asked permission. The day for raid-

ing is past. He must hold the Brock Road with half his command and send the other to the Shady Grove Church Road. The Federals are undoubtedly advancing toward Spottsylvania Court House. They must be checked on both roads until our army can get ahead of them. Longstreet's corps is marching to-night on the Shady Grove Church Road. General Lee wishes General Stuart to dismount his men and fight behind entrenchments. On no account must he charge the Federal cavalry, which will probably cover the Federal advance. He is to look out also for a Federal advance on his flank from the Piney Branch Road. He would better keep one brigade to cover the Piney Branch Road, a division with the guns on the Brock Road and a third division on the Shady Grove Church Road. Do you understand?"

"Entirely."

"Repeat me the orders to make sure."

Grafton spoke like a soldier in his haste, and Ariadne answered like one.

"It's this way," she said. She had brought to bear an unusually keen intellect to comprehend her husband's rapid instructions. "There are two roads to Spottsylvania Court House, the Brock Road and the Shady Grove Church Road. General Stuart is somewhere about Todd's Tavern? He is to divide his force into three parts. Put one part with the guns on the Brock Road at the tavern, or as near it as possible. The smallest division on the Piney Branch Road and another division on the Shady Grove Church Road. His men are to dismount and fight behind breastworks, such as they can improvise. General Lee is marching to Spottsylvania Court House by the Shady Grove Church Road and Longstreet's troops should get there some time to-morrow. He is to keep the Yankees back till then."

"You have it exactly," said her husband. "It's wonderful; I'm proud of you!"

"There hasn't been a move of the army for four years," answered Ariadne, "that I have not studied, map in hand."

"Were you thinking of me?"

"Of whom else?" she answered, turning her eyes full on him.

Heavens, how beautiful she was! Her plain and simple life, in that quiet, sequestered region, the hardy fare to which she perforce had accustomed herself, the open air exercises in the little garden and riding on the country roads, had developed her amazingly. Her cheek was tanned by the sun and air, her figure had rounded into proportions that were perfection itself. A healthy, if delicate, colour glowed in her cheek. Life, Youth, Love sparkled in her eye, crimsoned her lips.

Philip looked at her and thought what a fool he had been ever to have hesitated a moment, even in thought, in comparing her to Kathleen, or to any other woman, North or South. He was overwhelmingly in love with her, and his direct, passionate gaze brought the blood to her cheek and made her heart throb unsteadily. There had been no time for love-making between these two yet, but a word, a touch, a look, a whisper, in such a scene as they had passed through, spoke more than a thousand caresses in more quiet and less crowded hours.

"Now tell me about yourself," began the woman, hardly able to sustain the passionate intensity of his gaze.

"We must first discuss this matter in all its lights and bearings. Suppose the Yankees have already seized Todd's Tavern?"

"What would I better do then?"

"Is there any other way to get into the Brock Road from here?"

"No direct way."

"Is there any way at all?"

"I might get into it by riding around ten miles."

"That would never do. You can't go back to the Catharpin Road and then on so long as those fellows go that way."

"Suppose they go the other way, back to Todd's Tavern, that is?"

"Well, in that case you'd better insist upon going with me and then we'll trust to circumstances to make a dash for it."

"Very well; I'll get there some way, since it is so important to your honour and the safety of the army. But what will you do?"

"Ride on to General Stuart if I can escape. If it is too late, then I'll ride back to General Lee and confess everything."

"What is there to confess?"

"That I turned aside from a public duty in a private cause."

"He will forgive you."

"I do not know."

"How could he do otherwise?"

"You don't know that man. With him duty is everything. There's nothing he wouldn't sacrifice, no private cause, that is, for a public service."

"I should have been dead if you hadn't come . . . or worse," said Ariadne, shuddering.

"I shall be thankful so long as I live that I did come. Whatever happens to me . . . I hope to heaven you can get through with that message!"

"Philip, did they tell you how I found you at York?"

"Yes, after it was too late."

"I got through both armies then for your life. I'll get through now for your honour."

"May God preserve you! I do not know how I was such a fool to have had the treasure of your affection, only to throw it away."

"You may have it back again, and welcome."

"I have searched the country for you through my agents."

"Why didn't you come yourself?"

"I could not. It broke my heart, but I was needed in the army," said Grafton simply.

"I understand."

"But my heart was with you."

"And mine with you, dear." Her eyes brimmed as she looked at him. She had idealised him in his absence, and she was glad that the realisation made the ideal seem faint and weak. "I waited for you, longed for you," she continued. "I never dared to believe that you would care for . . . I had seen that other woman . . ."

"I was blind . . . she couldn't hold a candle to you!"

"I thought she was . . . beautiful."

"I did once, but that was before . . . Ariadne . . . do you know that you are the most beautiful thing I ever looked upon?"

The woman smiled. Her husband's remark was so direct, so genuine, so unexpected.

"I just worship you," he went on, "I am so proud of you."

"When the war is over . . ." she began.

"Do you think I'm going to wait for the end of the war before I claim you?" he interrupted.

"Oh, but, Philip, you must," she replied. "I can't realise it. It's all come upon me so suddenly. I feel, I wish to be wooed and won again. That

marriage . . . it was nothing. It seems to me there ought to be another."

"Miss 'Adny," called out old Aza from the vine-clad porch, "Aunt Dessy say de coffee an' bacon an' hoe cake's ready. She wan' know wot ter do wid hit."

"Serve it and bring it here," answered Ariadne.

She rose from the rustic bench on which she and Philip had been seated.

"Sir," she said to the Union officer, "the coffee and bacon are ready. I have told my servants to bring it out here. Perhaps some of your soldiers will assist them. You are doubtless in a hurry to get away."

"Two or three of you go in the house and bring out the gru . . . the coffee and bacon, I mean," said the officer, flushing at his mistake.

"I should like to know your name," continued Ariadne, smiling at him as some of the soldiers stepped toward the house.

"Harrington, madam," returned the young man. "William Harrington of the Second Maine Cavalry."

"My name is Grafton. I do not believe I have thanked you for your timely rescue. This is my husband, Captain Grafton"—she turned to Philip—of General Lee's staff."

"His staff!" exclaimed Harrington, staring, as a sudden idea struck him. What was one of General Lee's staff officers doing there? Then his lips spoke his thought. Grafton readily answered:

"I came here to see my wife."

"Umph!" said the other suspiciously; "you don't happen to have a stray despatch about you?"

"I have not," said Grafton, and he thanked God Lee had not reduced his orders to writing.

"No communication of any kind?" asked Harrington.

"No communication of any kind about me," returned Grafton coolly.

"You will pardon me, I am sure," said Harrington politely, "but I must be certain. You will not object to being searched?"

"Search my husband?" cried Ariadne.

"Captain Harrington means no indignity, my dear," said Grafton cheerfully. "Certainly, Captain, you can search me at your pleasure, but you will find nothing."

"Because you have it so carefully hidden?"

"Because there is nothing to find."

"Look here," said the Union officer, "will you give me your word of honour as an officer and a gentleman, that you have no papers or written orders of any description about you?"

"Cheerfully," returned Grafton, glad to be able to give the required assurance. "Upon my word of honour, as an officer and a gentleman, I have no written orders of any kind on my person in any shape or form, nor have I had any for several days."

"And you, madam, have you any?"

"None," answered Ariadne. "Would you like to search me?"

"God forbid!" said the officer, "but it is possible that he might have passed anything he carried to you."

"He did not," answered the young woman. "I give you my word of honour that he did not."

"Well, it is not very military," said Captain Harrington, greatly relieved, "but I accept your assurance. Now for the coffee."

If Captain Harrington had pursued his investiga-

tions further he would have trapped the two. While Grafton might have lied, and lied successfully, to conceal the fact that he had been charged with a verbal message, which he had turned over to his wife, in view of the tremendous gravity of the situation, the fact that the fate of Lee's army and the Confederacy practically hung upon the outcome of the conversation, and while Ariadne might have seconded such an assertion, it was morally certain her invincible honesty would have been unable to sustain a cross-examination upon that point. It was with a feeling of great relief, therefore, that they heard that inquisition terminated. As they stood together, Ariadne and her husband and Harrington on the porch, the soldiers out on the grass under the trees being served by the negroes, Grafton, to get his captor's mind off the dangerous subject, told Harrington something of his story. How his wife, possessing this little property—a fact, by the way, of which he had been ignorant, since she had received it from Mrs. Galloway—had gone to live there while he was in the army, and that they had not seen each other for nearly a year.

"There is a girl up North," said Harrington, "that I haven't seen for two years, and I'm getting mighty anxious to lay my eyes on her again. I hear from her nearly every time the mail gets through"—he tapped his breast-pocket with a pleasant smile—"but that's not like seeing her. I wish this war would hurry up and get finished," he went on. "Well, I guess we've a man now that'll wear you fellows out."

"I reckon not!" said Grafton confidently. "You've been trying to wear us out for three years, you know."

"Oh, yes, by fits and starts," said Harrington;

"but Grant's different. Why, the night after the battle of the Wilderness you ought to have heard the men cheering when they found out we were heading toward Richmond and not going across the Rap . . ."

He stopped suddenly, flushing furiously. Grafton studiously refrained from making the slightest comment on this incautious admission. He turned to Ariadne with the most casual remark, as if he had not noticed the slip, which was confirmation of General Lee's information of the movement of the army. So well did Grafton play his part that Harrington was convinced that he had not noticed. The incident, however, put an end to the luncheon. With an uneasy feeling that he had lingered too long in this pleasant place, the young officer rose to his feet and assembled his men. The horse of one of the guerillas was assigned to Grafton, whom Harrington resolved not to lose sight of for an instant. Hat in hand, he stepped forward to bid the young woman good-bye.

"Take my advice, madam," he said, as he thanked her for her kindness and hospitality, "don't stay here longer than you can. There's going to be fighting here and it's no place for women."

"Thank you for your counsel," said Ariadne graciously, "which I shall try to heed. I shall probably go away to-morrow."

"To-day, madam, to-day!" said Harrington emphatically. "The army may be along . . . I mean there's no time for delay."

"Very well, sir; I can never thank you enough for your timely arrival. The house would have been burned and we would have been certainly killed if you had not appeared when you did."

"And I wish to thank you also," said Grafton, "although you have captured me."

"Will you say good-bye to your wife, Captain Grafton? We must be moving immediately."

There was no such thing as privacy or secrecy now. The yard was full of soldiers in line. All that Grafton could do would have to be done before the public. He stepped closer to her, and although she put out her hand to stop him—for Ariadne had prepared for the contingency of their meeting and had made certain plans which unfortunately for her she could not carry out under these circumstances—he drew her to him, kissed her passionately and whispered, "You won't fail?" He heard her reply, "Trust me," and turned resolutely away.

"There's your horse," said the Union officer; "I suppose you do not wish to give your parole?"

"Under no circumstances, sir!"

"Very well. Sergeant, detail two men to ride on each side of Captain Grafton, fastening their horses to his own. Madam, good-bye and good luck to you." He took off his hat.

"Good-bye, Captain Harrington," said Ariadne; "may you soon see the girl in the North. Good-bye, Philip."

"Good-bye," said Grafton. "Shall I see you at the old house in Richmond?"

"If I can get there," said his wife.

"And if you can, sir," laughed Harrington. "I'm sorry to take your husband away, but——" He straightened up, clapped his hat on his head. "Right forward, fours right!" he cried. "Trot! March!"

Ariadne stood on the porch watching them go across the yard until they struck the road. Would they turn to the north or to the south? She was greatly relieved when she saw the head of the column swing into the road and turn to the south. Another

time she would have been filled with sorrow at the sudden parting after that brief but passionate meeting, but now she had other objects in view. She must ride to save Lee's army, to save the Confederacy, to save the honour of her husband, who had perilled all three to save her. How splendid he had been as he dashed up. She had known him instantly he had stepped on the porch—and he loved her! There was nothing on earth that she could not accomplish with that profound assurance in her soul. He loved her! He cared nothing for that Northern woman. He had said that he was proud of her, that she was the most beautiful woman his eyes had ever looked upon. Well, there would be time enough to dwell upon this later. The instant the cavalry disappeared down the road she turned to Aza.

“I want Bonnibel,” she cried, “as quick as you can get her. My revolver! Load it, tie a cloak on the saddle. A canteen, something to eat, a flask of whiskey! Aunt Dessy, help me with my riding things. Everything on earth, life and love and honour, the Confederate cause, all depend upon me now!”

“Gawd a'mighty!” cried old Aza, turning obediently, “is you gwine to suppote 'em all?”

“You kin do hit, honey,” said Aunt Dessy, surveying her charge, “you kin do hit. You got beauty, an' de strength an' de cur'ge dat'll match agin de whole er de Norf.”

Ten minutes later Ariadne, equipped for riding, came out on the porch where Aza had the horse ready for her.

“Stay in the house,” she said to the faithful servants, “and protect it as long as you can. I shall come back to you, if I can. If I do not, I shall go on to the old place in Richmond. If the house is not

destroyed by the Yankees, stay here until I come for you. If it is, try to get to Richmond and the old house. Do you understand?"

"Yas, Miss 'Adny," said Aza.

"Gawd bless you, honey," cried Aunt Dessy, lifting her arms and taking the girl to her breast. Gawd bless 'n spar' you fer Marse Phil! Ain't I glad he cum back to lub you!"

Ariadne swung herself into the saddle, called to Bonnibel and cantered up the road upon her tremendous errand.

CHAPTER XXII

THE RISK IN THE RUSE

BONNIBEL, a handsome gray mare, was in fine fettle. Like the well-bred horse she was, she was eager to go, but her mistress was too good a horse-woman, she had too vivid an appreciation of the demands that she might have to meet later on, to give her mare her head. The fate of the Confederacy, and her husband's honour, depended upon her that night, and she must depend upon the horse. When the time came Bonnibel would be ridden unsparingly, if necessary—but now Ariadne kept her down to a long easy canter which carried her up the winding road at a rapid pace.

Although Ariadne had displayed a marvellous aptitude in comprehending the military exigencies of the situation she sought to relieve, she was a woman, not a soldier. She had not learned the extreme necessity of vigilance in such undertakings through years of experience, and she therefore neglected precautions which a veteran scout would not have failed to observe. She did not stop at each turn and reconnoitre, for instance, but raced along rapidly, intent only upon her arrival at her goal and the delivery of her message. Outwardly intent, that is. Inwardly she was thinking of other things.

Never in her life had she been so happy. Philip had found her and she had found his heart. He loved her. Nothing else in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, could her thoughts have been projected in either

direction, mattered. Philip loved her! The impossible had come to pass. He had saved her from the most horrible of fates, to do which he had risked everything that men hold dear. It was not by word of mouth alone, therefore, that she knew how absolutely she possessed her husband's heart.

With what intensity of passion she had waited for him, longed for his presence, during those months in which she had fled from him! She had known, of course, that he would seek her, and she had wondered in what spirit he would meet her, whether with reproach, reproof, appeal, or resentment, or—but he loved her! She had never dreamed of that. His passion for her matched hers for him. She could read the signs by intuition—by observation of herself she had learned to know. She was sure of his love, there was no doubt about it. Her heart sang, her pulses throbbed as she rode swiftly over the winding path.

And there was sweetness almost beyond understanding in the fact that she was now doing something for him. Not only did he love her, but he was depending upon her. She was necessary to him. Not merely necessary to his happiness, but to his honour—perhaps to his very life. She was riding for him and for the cause that, next to him, she loved above everything else. Although every moment put distance between them, and she felt that she never wished to be parted from him again, she rode, the happiest girl in the Southern Confederacy.

The road was a very crooked one, simply a tenuous line through the wilderness, of which there were many to bring scattered clearings in touch with the great highways. It zigzagged through the woods in the most erratic fashion, to take in every wayside hut that desired connection with the main travelled roads.

Little branch paths just wide enough for a wagon to pass through meandered off at intervals, ending nowhere.

Ariadne had often travelled this road to Todd's Tavern on her way to the Piney Branch Church, which she sometimes attended. She was thoroughly acquainted with it and needed to give it no particular attention. It would be time enough for her to worry, she fancied, when she reached the tavern. She was more and more absorbed and entranced in her own thoughts, and there never was a more surprised woman than she when a sharp voice bade her halt. At the same instant a man carrying a shining rifle sprang out of the underbrush, presenting his piece full at her breast.

Her first impulse was to ride him down. She raised the whip she carried, but before it fell another man scrambled through the coppice on the opposite side. He, too, presented his piece threateningly. The first man cried loudly:

"All right, Captain; it's only a woman."

An instant after the road was filled with men on horses. Ariadne had thrown Bonnibel violently back on her haunches when she saw the impossibility of escape before her. Quick as a flash as the road filled with the men she wheeled the mare for a dash back, and this time the whip fell, but a resolute hand had already grasped the bridle. In her excitement, with difficulty keeping her seat on the plunging mare, Ariadne struck at the man with her whip. Her effort was futile, of course, for the man caught the whip and wrenched it from her hand.

"It's no use, madam; whoa . . . damn you!" he cried, dividing his attention impartially between the rider and the horse. "We've got you."

"Who is it, Corporal?" asked a tall bearded man

spurring through the press until he confronted the woman. Instantly his hat came off.

"I beg your pardon, madam," he said, "but we must know who you are and your business."

Ariadne looked at him with the deepest interest. She was dismayed beyond measure at being thus checked at the very outstart of her journey. She realised that she should have been more careful. She recognised, too late, that she should have given more thought to her errand and less to her own affections. As her peril had been Philip's undoing, so his love had like to be hers. Also, what answer to make to this question did not immediately occur to her.

The men were nondescript as to uniform. Some of them wore the regulation uniform of United States soldiers, infantry, artillery, cavalry, although they were all mounted. A few of them—and these the most dilapidated—had on grey jackets. The officer who was addressing her was shrouded from head to foot in a blue military cape, although the evening was extremely warm. Were they her people or did they belong to the enemy? Before she answered Ariadne studied the faces of the men who had closed around her, and they did not look like Northern men.

"Which side do you belong to?" she asked, in turn hoping for a clue.

This was something of a poser, and it was the captain's turn to hesitate.

"Madam," he said at last, and the voice sounded Southern to her, although she could not be sure, "answer me a few questions and I'll tell you. Where do you live?"

There was no reason for concealing that fact, thought Ariadne, so she promptly replied.

"Back a mile or so down the road in a little cottage."

“Are you a Virginian?”

“I am.”

“Are you for the North or South?”

Now that was a strange question, but some Virginians were for the North, and the secret service of either army employed a good many women agents, who were less liable to suspicion than men.

“For the South!” answered Ariadne instantly. There was such a ring of sincerity in her voice that the officer was more than half convinced. He questioned her further, however.

“Will you tell me your name?”

“My name——” Ariadne hesitated. “Lewis,” she said at last.

“Are you related to Judge Lewis of Prince George County?”

“I was. He is dead, you know. I am his granddaughter.”

This admission would have been very damaging had the captain belonged to the other side, but Ariadne had shrewdly studied the faces of the captors and she was at last convinced that they were Southerners. Besides, when it came to a point of that kind Ariadne was incapable of lying. Indeed, she had answered the first question impulsively, and she had to go on telling the truth. Fortune was with her.

“We are for the South, too, madam,” said the officer. “My name is Elson, Captain Elson.”

“You relieve me greatly,” said Ariadne. “I am delighted to meet you, sir. But those blue uniforms?”

“We got them from some Yanks who won’t need any other covering than Mother Earth from now on,” said the captain. “Our army is so destitute of everything that we are forced to live off the enemy.”

He smiled. "We are doing it, too. See!" He throw off the heavy cloak which was so oppressive in the warm weather, and Ariadne saw his own uniform of worn Confederate grey. "I shall not need this for a space," continued the officer. "When we heard your horse thundering down the road we didn't know what was coming, and we laid a trap for you. You were making enough noise for a troop of cavalry."

"I know," said Ariadne; "I forgot. I have much to learn before I can be a soldier."

The captain laughed again.

"Forgive me," he said, "but the idea is so absurd."

"Yet I am charged with a vital message," said Ariadne gravely. "I will tell you all about it now." She was dead sure of her position by this time. In fact she remembered to have heard of the Elson family. "My name is Grafton."

"But you said Lewis."

"That was my maiden name. I am married to Captain Grafton . . ." she stopped. "Have you ever heard of him?"

"I know a Philip Grafton on General Lee's staff."

"He is my husband," said Ariadne promptly.

"Madam, I am more than pleased to meet you now and beg your forgiveness for the detention."

"It is nothing," said Ariadne; "my husband was riding with important orders from General Lee to General Stuart. He was captured by a squad of Federal cavalry. They didn't think it necessary to take me with them. My husband managed to give me his orders and I'm riding to find General Stuart."

"Where do you expect to find him?" asked Captain Elson.

“At Todd’s Tavern.”

“You won’t find him there. The Yanks are there in force. We’re a scouting party from Early’s corps—that was Hill’s. We have been sent to find a practicable way to reach the Catharpin Road.”

“This road here,” said Ariadne, “will take you directly to it.”

“Are there any Federal troops down that way?”

“Only a scouting party, so far as I know.”

“The one that captured your husband?”

“Yes.”

“The Catharpin Road leads into the Brock Road at Todd’s Tavern, doesn’t it?”

“Yes.”

“I suppose they will have sent detachments down it also?”

“I suppose so,” answered Ariadne.

“They won’t be in great force, however,” commented Captain Elson. “The only troops at Todd’s Tavern are Yankee cavalry. So far as I can learn the Federal infantry hasn’t come up yet.”

“What are you going to do now?” asked Ariadne.

“Nothing. I can depend upon this information you have given me?”

“Absolutely. Can I depend upon you?”

“With the greatest confidence, madam,” said the captain. “What do you intend to do?” he asked in turn.

“I must get to General Stuart. Where are you going?”

“Back to General Early to report the practicability of this road, immediately. Unless I can serve you.”

“Thank you,” said the young woman, who had been thinking hard, but without seeing any light, “you see there is no way to get into the Brock Road down

which General Stuart has probably retreated except by way of Todd's Tavern, unless I should go back with you and take a wide circle around to the north and get on the Piney Branch Road."

"In which case you would inevitably fall into the hands of some of the marching Yanks."

"Exactly. Therefore I must break through at Todd's Tavern somehow."

"Is there any road that leads off to the eastward?"

"None that I know of, and if there were it would stop at the Catharpin Road and so take me to the tavern in the same way."

"You'll have to give it up, I fear."

"I cannot!"

"How are you going to get through then?"

"I do not know how, but I must get through some way."

"May I ask what the orders are you have for General Stuart?"

"I do not think I ought to tell you, sir," said Ariadne doubtfully. "If you could get through yourself, or you would be willing to make the attempt, or should take the responsibility . . ."

"It's out of the question for me to try it," returned Captain Elson; "I must get back to General Early as soon as possible. Have you written orders?"

"No, they are verbal."

"Because if they were written I was going to suggest that you destroy them after committing them to memory before you approach the Union lines."

"I should have done that, but the orders are not written."

"I can guess," said Elson, "that General Lee

orders General Stuart to hold the Union forces back until he reaches Spottsylvania Court House."

"You can guess all you wish," said Ariadne, smiling pleasantly, "and if your guess is correct, you can see the importance of my getting through."

"I see," returned the captain, delighted with his own acumen. "Well, what do you propose and how can I help you?"

A plan had come to Ariadne while they had been talking, a forlorn hope, but the only one that promised any success at all.

"I would like you to ride with me as near to the Union lines as possible," she began, "and then let me get ahead of you a short distance. Then you and your men can chase me into the Union lines. Fire and make as much noise as you wish, but don't hit me, if you can help it. I'll pose as a Northern woman seized by Confederate troops and get permission from the commanding officer to go to my home near the Piney Branch Church. There is a short cut that leads from the Piney Branch Road about a mile above Todd's Tavern straight into the Brock Road a mile below it. I will take that road, which will put me in advance of the Union troops and so get to Stuart."

"It's a good plan," said Captain Elson, "but risky."

"How is that?"

"In the first place, to make the pursuit a successful one we will have to approach near the Federal lines and some one is pretty sure to get hurt."

"Oh, I hadn't thought of that," said Ariadne, dismayed.

"It's part of a soldier's life, madam, to risk things. I take it your orders are of sufficient importance to justify me in hazarding my men."

"They are. You may not take my woman's word for it . . . I mean you might think I am not capable of judging . . . but my husband said . . ."

"I know they must be," interrupted Captain Elson, who had divined them all, "and I will take the risk."

"Thank you. Let us ride on?" said Ariadne; "it's getting late."

The captain turned to his men.

"Men," he said, "this lady is the wife of an officer on General Lee's staff. Her husband was carrying important orders from General Lee to General Stuart when he was captured. His wife volunteered to carry the orders. She is to pass through the Union lines to Todd's Tavern. She will pose as a Union woman. We're going to help her out in her deception by giving chase to her when near enough to make it interesting. I wish you to make as much noise as possible, yell, shoot, but be careful not to hit the lady. Go as close to the line as possible, but keep your horses well in hand, and at my signal—I shall be in the lead—wheel and ride back for your lives. If I fall, if any of us fall, the survivors will join General Early and report the practicability of the road. Do you understand?"

They were veteran soldiers, and their faces lighted with pleasure as they took in the daring ruse. A shout of acquiescence came from their bearded lips. One old sergeant, he who had seized Ariadne's horse, spoke for his comrades.

"We understand, Cap'n, but I would like to ax you one question, sir, if I mought be so bold."

"What is it?"

"We're not to shoot at the leddy . . . God bless her . . . but you wouldn't mind ef we plugged a few of them Yanks with lead, would you?"

"Certainly not," said the captain, smiling; "that'll make the affair more real."

Ariadne shuddered at the evident relish with which these men received that word of their captain.

"Oh, I hope no one will be shot!" she said.

"I hope none of our men will," said Elson, motioning her forward and with her leading the way.

An hour's riding brought them to the turn of the road, half a mile beyond which lay the Union lines. Elson and Ariadne rode forward until they had a fair view of the situation. The Union cavalry, save for some picket guards on the road, had dismounted and the men were evidently preparing supper. It was by this time about six o'clock.

"Everything is favourable," said Captain Elson. "Now you stay where you are. I will ride back and tell the men. When you hear a pistol shot behind you ride like mad straight down the road. Don't look back or draw rein for anything. We'll do the rest. Remember if the thing is to be carried out safely you must go at the best speed of your horse."

"I shall remember. You have been very good to me. If you . . . if I get through I shall tell your general what you did. Good-bye."

She extended her hand to him. He took it in his own.

"For the sake of a girl down South," he said gallantly, bending over it and kissing her hand.

CHAPTER XXIII

A HEAVY PRICE

THE Confederate bowed gracefully to her, wheeled his horse and galloped back toward his men. She watched him a moment as he disappeared through the trees, and then, gathering her reins in her hand, with a wildly-beating heart she waited. Presently she heard a shot from the woods behind her. Instantly she spoke to Bonnibel. The mare sprang forward at the sound of her mistress' voice. Glad was Ariadne that she had saved her during the afternoon. Happy was Bonnibel at being given freedom to do her best. Like a brown arrow she leaped forward, and in a few seconds she was running at full speed along the road.

Ariadne cast one quick glance backward and there behind her, a short distance away, thundered the squadron. It was spread out in a long line, by Elson's prearrangement, of course, as if the chase had been a hot one. The wind blew swiftly by her ears, but she caught the sound of yells and heard the crack of shots. Sometimes the dust flicked up on either side of her. There was something fearfully real about the situation which made Ariadne's heart beat faster and her cheek pale. Suppose one of those men in his excitement should make a mistake and a bullet should strike her? But she could not give much thought to this; another peril suddenly confronted her—a peril that the captain had realised, but which he had in mercy withheld from Ariadne.

The Union picket on the road had heard the first shot and had instantly given the alarm by firing his carbine. He fired it straight in the direction of Ariadne, too. A bullet whizzed past her ear. The sentry was a bold one, for instead of riding to join the main guard, posted halfway between the line and the picket, she could see him lower the carbine and jam another cartridge in it. One or two of her pursuers were armed with long-range rifles. The sentry discharged his piece again. He was not shooting at Ariadne—it was obvious to him that she was trying to escape—but was gallantly trying to stop her pursuers. The range was too long for the cavalry weapon and the sentry hit no one. He wheeled his horse to fly and suddenly pitched forward in the saddle before the eyes of the woman who was approaching him at a furious gallop. He had been shot dead. The main guard by this time were in the saddle and racing forward to meet the onrush. Back of them in the Union line bugles were shrilling, men were running to and fro.

With every second the distance between the two bodies of troops, with Ariadne in the middle, was decreasing. Now they were both firing rapidly. How could she hope to escape in that cross fire? She would have turned to the right and left, but the road prevented. She bent her head low over Bonibel and with a swift but fervent prayer rode desperately on. She would be killed, she knew, but it would be in Philip's service—and the Confederacy's. And he loved her! She was almost in touch with the Union picket now; they were trotting rapidly forward. Remembering her plot, she instantly raised her head and screamed:

“I am a Union woman, escaping. Help!”

The sergeant in command nodded, the ranks

opened and she ran through. The greater part of her peril was over. Instinctively she checked the speed of Bonnibel and turned to look. The two bodies of cavalry, the Union detachment being outnumbered two to one, had met with a terrific smash in the middle of the road. The Federals, unconscious of what might be coming on behind the Confederate troop, were being deliberately sacrificed in order to give the supporting battalions already starting from the Union line time to form to resist what might be an attack in force.

The Confederates fell on them like a storm. There was a tremendous *mêlée*, in which the clouds of dust flicked up in the road by the horses were shot with fire and smoke; out of which came yells, cheers, shrieks, and pistol shots, with the ringing, gritting sound of sabre on sabre. Ariadne came to a dead stop, appalled.

It was all over in a few moments. The Union troops were cut down or beaten back. A few helpless figures, bleeding from wounds, were carried to the rear by their horses. Others lay on the road trampled by the terrified horses running aimlessly about. The Union troops from the tavern were coming up on a gallop. The Confederates, in obedience to some command, were retreating as rapidly as they had come.

In the rear, with a man supporting him on either side, Ariadne could see a big black horse, which she recognised as Elson's, bearing the body of the captain, which lay limply upon the pommel of the saddle. There had been risk in the ruse. He had paid for the bit of realism with his life. His men were carrying his body with his report to his general. A moment since he had kissed her hand for the sake of a girl in the South. Ariadne's temptation was to

turn and race after him. Her hand went to her breast, she choked down a sob.

She had backed her horse as far into the underbrush by the side of the way as she could. In the meantime the cheering men in blue went racing past her in chase of the Confederates. It would have gone hard for the Confederates had not the Union cavalry been recalled after a time by the brigadier, who presently rode up to where Ariadne sat her horse, pale as death, her bosom heaving, her lips dry, a look of terror in her eyes, and asked what was the explanation of it all.

This indeed was real war, such as this woman had not before experienced or imagined. She had not dreamed of anything like this. This was what Philip indulged in every day; the thought of that soldier who loved her aided her in her resolution.

"Madam," said the general, "can you explain this . . . but you are wounded!"

"Wounded?"

"Yes, in the arm."

Ariadne looked down at her arm. Blood was on her sleeve. Some bullet from one side or the other had grazed that arm and she had never felt it.

"Allow me," said the officer, lifting her arm; "it is only a scratch," he went on reassuringly. "Have you a handkerchief?"

Ariadne did not answer. She was incapable of speech for the moment. The sight of blood, her own blood, sickened her.

"Here," said the general, proffering her a flask, "take a swallow of this."

He tore the thin sleeve, and, producing his own handkerchief, bound it tightly around the bloody streak that showed upon the tender surface. Ariadne with difficulty took a swallow of the whiskey, but it

was not easy for her to speak even then, though she summoned all her courage to reply to the officer.

"Perhaps you can explain now," he said once more.

"I am a Northern woman, sir. The Confederates are approaching from the south, I learned. I live down near where this road joins the Catharpin Road, and I am going to the residence of a friend of mine at Piney Branch Church. Those Rebels, who were scouting the country, took me prisoner. They didn't guard me very well, and when I saw your camp through the trees I made a dash to escape."

"Well, you are either a very foolish woman or a very brave one. You will pardon my frankness, I am sure," said the general. "My name is Manning. I command this brigade."

Ariadne started and looked at him curiously. There had been something in his appearance that had been familiar to her. She knew that he had been a lieutenant-colonel of infantry at Gettysburg. She had not heard that he had been promoted successively to colonel and brigadier-general and had been assigned to the cavalry for this campaign. She had seen Manning's picture many times at the farmhouse, but he had not worn a beard when it was taken. For a moment she thought of telling him everything and appealing to him, but a second thought convinced her that it would be the height of foolishness, for Manning would inevitably detain her if the slightest suspicion were awakened in his mind that she were not heart and soul for the North, and she knew that he knew that the wife of Grafton must be Southern through and through. Therefore when he spoke to her again and asked her name her answer was that it was Lewis. It was indeed her maiden name, but he had never heard it.

“Well, Miss Lewis,” he continued, taking for granted that so young a woman would naturally be unmarried, “you have certainly shown that you possess plenty of pluck, and devotion to the cause as well, by risking your life to get away from our friends, the Confederates. How you escaped I don’t see. I saw you plainly; you were between two fires, and you are lucky to have got off with only this. How does it feel?”

He pointed to her wounded arm, her left arm, fortunately.

“It . . . it hurts a little,” answered Ariadne, “but not much. I didn’t feel it until you spoke and I saw the blood.”

“There’s many a wound that is not felt,” said the general, “until the blood is seen, but that in your arm fortunately is superficial. One of my surgeons will bind it up and beyond a day or two’s inconvenience and some slight annoyance you will take no hurt from it. Now, what further can I do for you?”

“Nothing but let me get through your lines to Piney Branch Church.”

“You will find our troops on that road and may have difficulty in getting through.”

“I must go,” said Ariadne, “my mother is there and . . .”

She was astonished at the fluency with which she could tell this shocking untruth, and dismayed as well. It seemed so base in her deliberately to take advantage of the confidence of the Union general, who was moreover the husband of the woman for whom she now felt pity, almost affection, since Philip did not love her. Well she had earned the confidence of that Northern general by her tremendous exploit of a few moments before.

“Very well,” said Manning, “I will give you a

note which you can present, if you are stopped by any troops you may come across, which will enable you to get to the church, undoubtedly."

While they were speaking the Union cavalry returning from the pursuit began to defile past them. A man in the rear battalion was leading a great black horse. Upon it lay a grey-jacketed figure.

"What have you there?" asked the general, as the troops approached him and Ariadne. "See what it is, Fiske," he said to a staff officer who had accompanied him. The men had halted at the general's word. Lieutenant Fiske rode forward and returned in a moment.

"It's the body of the Rebel captain, sir. He was evidently killed in the *mêlée* and his men tried to take him with them. The men say that two troopers who were with him fought like tigers before they were killed."

"Is the captain dead, you say?" asked Ariadne.

"Yes, madam," said the lieutenant.

Ariadne shuddered. Fifteen minutes before he had kissed her hand "for the sake of a girl down South." She felt that she could not endure the situation, yet something—that nervous reserve of power and strength which even the weakest woman seems to have at command when the emergency arises—came to her assistance. She had played a part so far, and to play it had cost the lives of many brave men. To give way now, to break down, would make the sacrifice vain. She locked her teeth together and stared ahead. The general spoke to her.

"Did you know this man?"

"He told me his name was Elson," said Ariadne; "I had never seen him until they captured me on the road."

"Poor fellow," said Manning; "that was a gal-

lant charge on our line. I wish it had been for a nobler purpose than the pursuit of a woman."

Here again Ariadne did not have power to speak. One word would have cleared the dead man's memory. He had not been pursuing a woman. He was risking his life to save the army and the Confederacy—and Philip's honour. She was silent.

"It was a brave dash, though. We'll give him honourable interment. He was your enemy," he continued, "will you . . ."

"I shall be anxious to do anything you wish," said Ariadne eagerly.

"I will have his body examined, and if there are any papers or other private matters upon him, I will turn them over to you. Will you see that they are forwarded where they belong when occasion serves?"

"I will do it gladly," said Ariadne.

She was so honest, so sincere a soul, that even when she was deceiving, people trusted her. This made her task the harder.

"Did you find whether they got all the party, Fiske?" asked the general.

"No, sir, they didn't," returned the lieutenant. "About half of them got away."

"How many of ours unhurt?"

"About twenty-five have been killed or badly wounded and a number scratched."

Over forty men, therefore, had laid down their lives in that little episode in order to get Ariadne through the lines. In war, for the slightest thing, sometimes, one pays a heavy price.

Half an hour later, with a lock of hair, a bundle of letters and a watch in the breast of her dress, all of which had belonged to the captain—which were not so heavy and cold as the sad heart that beat

against the timepiece—Ariadne, armed with a safe conduct from General Manning, explaining how she came through his lines and where she was going, set forth on the Piney Branch Church Road. Just as she left the general a courier dashed up at full speed. The general tore open the despatch, scanned it rapidly and instantly ordered Lieutenant Fiske to ride after Ariadne, who was still within easy sight on the road, and bring her back. Fiske at the full speed of his horse rapidly overhauled her.

To avoid suspicion she had ridden her horse very slowly away. She did not wish to seem too eager to leave the Union lines. General Manning had offered to send an escort with her, but she had refused, persisting that she knew every inch of the road and that it was unnecessary. She had imprudently added that she knew every bypath thoroughly, and had said that she was sure no one would molest her with the general's safe conduct. The staff officer halloed to her and, resisting a wild impulse to put spur to her horse and fly, she turned as she saw him approaching.

"Beg pardon, madam," he said, as he drew rein beside her, "but General Manning wishes to see you again."

With deep misgiving Ariadne turned her horse and went back to the general.

"Miss Lewis," he said, "you have a chance to render our cause a great service."

"What is it?" asked Ariadne, with sinking heart.

"You said you knew every road, every bypath in the vicinity."

She nodded; she could do nothing else after that uncalled for but accurate assertion.

"I have received orders from General Sheridan to send regiments scouting on all the roads parallel-

ing the Brock Road. He has learned that Stuart's cavalry is contemplating an advance movement toward Todd's Tavern, and he wishes us to check him, if possible, and hold him in play until he gets up. Now I have heard there is a road that leads out of the Piney Branch Road into the Brock Road about a mile above us here. There is such a road, I presume?"

"Yes," faltered Ariadne.

"If you will ride with one of my regiments, then, and indicate the road, I shall be greatly obliged to you. I think I can depend upon your intelligence and I have had unequivocal proof of your courage and devotion to the Union . . . a rare thing in Virginia," he added gallantly, "but not the less appreciated on account of that."

Poor Ariadne was trapped. There was absolutely no way to escape. There was nothing she could do but acquiesce. This business of playing the courier brought her in strange positions. She found herself obliged to use her knowledge of the country to lead the Union troops down upon her friends. There was no way to avoid it. She could have told Manning the truth, but that would be the end of her message to Stuart. If she were silent and went on, by some trick of Fate she might get away and deliver the orders. At any rate she could do nothing by remaining at headquarters, and every step took her nearer her goal. Fortunately she was asked to lead the troops in the direction which her errand indicated.

"Certainly," she replied, as all this flashed into her mind. "I will go gladly and show the path."

"Good," said Manning; "I knew I could depend upon you. Lieutenant Fiske, is the Second Maine Cavalry ready to move?"

This was the regiment to which Harrington's detachment belonged. One troop held her husband prisoner, and now she was to lead the rest of the regiment against Stuart.

"Yes, sir," answered Fiske.

"Ask Colonel Ledyard to report here. Ah, Colonel Ledyard, let me present you to Miss Lewis, a devoted Union woman, although a Virginian. She knows the country hereabouts and will show you the bypath that leads into the Brock Road. You will take your regiment as far toward the Brock Road as you can without endangering it too greatly. Should you meet any of the Rebel cavalry advancing you are to keep them in check as long as you can. The Ninth Corps is marching toward Piney Branch Church, and should reach there to-morrow morning. You can fall back that way upon Burnside, or upon us, in case you are hard pressed. I shall advance down the Brock Road and send a regiment down the Catharpin Road as well. We must hold them off until Merritt and Warren and Sedgwick get up. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"By the way, any report from Harrington yet?"

"No, sir."

"Well, he can take care of himself, I guess."

"I'm sure of it, sir," answered Ledyard confidently.

"You will find Miss Lewis devoted to our cause," laughed the general; "she will tell you how she came into the Union lines as you go along."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MESSAGE IN THE DARK

ARIADNE never forgot that ride at the head of that splendid regiment of Union cavalry. Even her inexperienced eye could mark the difference between the well-fed horses, the well-armed, well-clothed, contented-looking men, and the lean and hungry steeds and the riders of the Confederate army, living on air and hope, and one ear of raw corn per diem between them—the men sharing the rations with their priceless horses. To have to talk, in a quiet conventional way, with a strange officer who wore the uniform of the enemy, at the time when her heart was quivering with excitement, alarm, uncertainty, and all sorts of complex emotions, was not the least part of her task. She had made up her mind to lead the regiment correctly. Indeed there was nothing else to do. She was desperate now, and the only plan she could think of, in case they did come in touch with the Confederates, was to make another dash for it and trust to Providence to carry her safe from one line to the other between the two fires.

It was a weird and mysterious progress, as the night fell and darkness came. They wended their way through a heavy growth of trees, which, in the blackness of the moonless night, was well-nigh impenetrable. Just at dusk they had struck the branch road which was one of those wood trails through the forest, so encumbered with logs and brush as to make the going almost impossible to horses. Once having set the column on that road, Ariadne could do

little more. She could not see; there were no landmarks by which the way could be traced. It was a mere question of feeling. Some of the most experienced men under the command of a vigorous officer formed the advance, and the regiment in a column of fours, for the road was barely wide enough for that, was strung out in a long line.

They made a tremendous noise in spite of every effort. The horses starting and stumbling, the men muttering and cursing, as they crashed along in no little confusion. It was nervous work this plunging through blackness, not knowing what would happen. At any moment they might run across the enemy wandering aimlessly as they, and then one of those horrible scenes with which the Battle of the Wilderness had abounded, a death-grapple in the darkness, would ensue. Every man had his carbine ready, every officer loosened his pistol in his holster.

Ariadne rode near the head of the column by the side of the colonel. Manning had not told Colonel Ledyard that Ariadne was going to the Piney Branch Church, so when she turned with the rest of the regiment in the byroad he expressed no surprise. Conversation had been forbidden in a vain effort to lessen the noise, and the colonel rode in silence, saying nothing save to give a whispered reply to an equally low report from some officer or man who fancied he had something to tell.

As for Ariadne, she was in a state of nervous tension almost amounting to hysteria. She had seen so much death, she had passed through so many exciting scenes, that she had not strength for this terrible prowl in the Stygian darkness. She knew the dangers that lay before them, that any moment they might blunder into the enemy in spite of every precaution, and she kept listening in strained expectation



“It was a weird and mysterious progress, as the night fell and darkness came”

for the report of a weapon, the shriek of a victim, the cheer of a fighter. Listening while her heart beat so that it sounded in her ears like the tap of a drum.

The intangible is always the more terrible than the real to the being whose only courage is moral. This is the high variety in which women abound. If it had been daylight, Ariadne could have stood it better, but each slow, plodding step of her horse, as they felt their way over the broken road, made her wish to give vent to her feelings in a wild scream. She had reached the limit of her endurance when the expected happened.

Without a word of warning, without the slightest indication, the wood to the right was suddenly illuminated by what seemed to the startled girl to be a number of vivid flashes of lightning, and the darkness was split by a series of terrific concussions. Her horse stopped, screamed horribly and sank shuddering to the ground. She heard shrieks and cries, groans and curses. She herself was conscious of a sharp pain in her shoulder; something smote her head like a hammer. She felt and knew nothing more.

Merciful oblivion rushed over her like a wave. She could not hear the spluttering fire with which the discharge was returned; the words of command, by which the officers strove to rally the regiment; the wild flight back up the road in a confused, disorganised mass, which the officers tried in vain to stay. She knew nothing at all until a light flashed into her face and she opened her eyes to find a figure bending over her, a bearded, rough-looking man, seen dimly in the faint light cast by a lantern, and to hear a voice exclaiming:

“Great God, it’s a woman!”

It was a Southern voice, it must be a Southern man.

"Who are you?" she asked feebly.

"My name is Wittington. I belong to the Sixth Virginia Cavalry."

"General Stuart's command?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Is he here?"

"Back on the road about a mile and a half away."

"Take me to him immediately."

"But you are wounded in the shoulder," said the officer, lifting his lantern.

"No matter. I have a message from General Lee to General Stuart of the greatest importance."

"How came you to be with that Yankee regiment, then?"

"I can't explain now," said Ariadne. "But if you love your country, for God's sake take me to General Stuart!"

"What is it, Wittington?" asked Colonel Green, who commanded the regiment, at that moment riding up.

A detachment of Confederates was busy with lanterns inspecting the dead and wounded, who lay in great heaps in the road. A sharp fire further on in the forest indicated that Colonel Ledyard had finally got his troops in hand, and as he greatly outnumbered the small Confederate force, he was at last holding their advance in check. No blame could have been attached to him for the ambush into which he had fallen under such circumstances. After the first shock of surprise was over he rallied his men and was carrying out the orders to check the advance of the Confederates with the coolness and precision of a veteran. Now that he knew that the enemy was there, after dismounting his men, he could play the

game of wild forest fighting in the dark as well as they.

"It's a woman, a lady, sir," answered Captain Wittington, lifting his lantern higher. "She says she has a message for General Stuart from General Lee."

"You may give me the message, madam."

"I will not; I cannot give it to any one but the general. You must send me to him at once!"

"She's wounded," said Wittington, "in the shoulder."

"Madam," said the colonel, getting off his horse and kneeling beside her as she lay half supported by the Confederate officer, "it is so; you have a bullet through your shoulder. And bless me, a gash across your temple. You are in no condition . . ."

"For God's sake, sir, I must get to General Stuart if I die! I have come through everything."

"But that Yankee regiment?"

"I had to go with them. I will explain all to General Stuart. The fate of the army depends . . ."

"What is your name?"

"Grafton, Mrs. Philip Grafton."

"Your husband is . . ."

"A captain on General Lee's staff."

"Why, he was at General Stuart's headquarters this morning, Colonel. I saw him there," said Wittington.

"Yes, yes," said Ariadne. "Now will you take me back?"

"Where is the surgeon?"

"Here, sir," said the doctor from a nearby wounded man.

"Ah, Doctor. Here's a woman . . ."

"What, sir!"

"Yes, see what you can do for her quickly."

The physician came over and knelt down beside Ariadne, slit her dress on the shoulder, the right shoulder this time, and began a hasty examination.

"Wittington," said Colonel Green, as the doctor relieved the staff officer, "get a horse somewhere. Ride back with this lady to General Stuart, if the doctor says she can go, that is."

"I must go!" said Ariadne, wincing as the surgeon examined the wound.

"It's only a flesh wound, madam. Your temple is grazed, too. What's the matter with this arm?" he asked as he noticed the bandage on the left arm.

"That was from a Yankee bullet this afternoon," answered Ariadne, struggling desperately against an overwhelming inclination to faint.

"Great heaven!" exclaimed the colonel, "have you been shot at by both sides?"

"Yes."

"Do you think she can go, Doctor?"

"I guess so," answered the surgeon dubiously. "Here, take a swallow of this?"

For the second time that afternoon Ariadne was revived by the whiskey, which she hated. Of course the stimulant helped her, but only her iron resolution carried her through. Her shoulder and her arm both pained her exceedingly. The bullet that had just grazed her head gave her the most suffering, however. The skull had not been fractured, but the concussion had been terrific, and her head rang and throbbed and beat until she was almost insane.

They had put her own saddle on the troop horse assigned to her and knotted the reins over the pommel. She was unable to use her right hand, and to move her left was also difficult. Captain Wittington

and a soldier rode on either side of her; the latter part of the journey she rode with the captain's arm around her waist, her head on his shoulder. In no other way could she sit her horse. The captain was a gentleman, however, and he was an officer in the Confederate army as well, she reflected. Philip would probably be ragingly jealous if he had seen her thus supported, but there was no help for it.

After riding, it seemed to her hours, through the blackness she suddenly caught sight of a light among the trees far ahead. Really she had only come about a mile and a half from the place of the ambush. The light came from Stuart's camp. The scene was picturesque and peaceful. Around the fire a little group of men was congregated. Some lay on the ground, others sat with their backs against the trees. One of them was strumming a banjo and singing a song with a curious refrain:

"If you want to have a good time,
 Jine the cavalry,
 Jine the cavalry,
 Bully, boys, hey!"

Back of this group could be dimly seen the heads of the regiments, the men standing by their horses at ease. Off to the right of the men gleamed grim-looking cannon reflecting the light from their polished brass muzzles. The peculiar odour of chicory boiling over the fire met them as they approached. The light was low upon the ground and the lofty tree trunks were shrouded in an intenser blackness overhead. The effect was strange and beautiful, but Ariadne had no eyes for it then.

"We're here, ma'am," said Wittington gently. "There, by the fire yonder, is General Stuart."

As the three horses came into the light the group around the fire caught sight of them. A tall man seated on a log with his back against the tree, who had been listening to the banjo, sprang to his feet and stepped toward the newcomers, shading his face with his hand.

"Whom have we here?" he exclaimed. "By heavens, Wittington, and a woman!"

"Help her down, gentlemen," said Wittington. "She has a message for you, General."

The general sprang to the side of Adriadne's horse. He fairly lifted her to the ground, and as he observed her reeling, he held her tightly.

"Whiskey!" he cried.

"No," said Ariadne, "I've had enough whiskey; let me down. Give me a drink of water."

She knew that she was going to die, at least she felt so, but she knew that she could keep up until she had delivered her message. With coats and saddles the men of the staff made a seat for her on a log backed by a tree near the camp fire. Some one brought her cool water from a nearby spring. They waited until she drank, and, pouring the rest upon her hands, wetted her face.

"Will you have a cup of coffee, madam, only it's chicory?" asked the chief officer.

"Nothing more," said Ariadne. "Are you General Stuart?" she asked, looking up at the tall blond figure bending over her.

"I am; what can I do for you?"

"General Lee is moving toward Spottsylvania Court House. He got your message that the Federals were converging upon that point also. He orders you to send a division up the Brock Road, dismount them, throw up breastworks, and to hold back the Union advance as long as possible."

The general listened in silence. The staff crowded around in breathless attention.

"That's not all," continued Ariadne, after taking another swallow of water; "another division is to be sent over to the Shady Grove Church Road to hold it and the Catharpin Road, if possible. General Longstreet is already on the march toward Spottsylvania Court House by way of the Shady Grove Church. By morning all of General Lee's corps will be moving. You are not to try to cut Grant's communications. It's more important to hold these roads, to give General Lee time to get to Spottsylvania Court House before the Federals, than anything else. Wait, there's something more. He thinks that the Federal troops may move down the Piney Branch Church Road, so you are to be careful not to be taken in flank there. You are to be sure to fight dismounted, for if you charged the Federal cavalry . . . although you could beat them, you would not be in condition to withstand the advance of the infantry supports. You are to fight to hold them back to the last gasp. That's all."

"Madam, who are you that you deliver such a message?" asked Stuart in amazement.

"My name is Grafton. I am the wife of Captain Philip Grafton of General Lee's staff.

"He's got a wife to be proud of, then," said Stuart. "But have you any written orders?"

"None. The orders were given verbally to Captain Grafton this noon."

"How do you happen to transmit them?"

"He was captured by a squadron of Union cavalry near my house, just off the Catharpin Road, two miles below Todd's Tavern, this afternoon. I escaped . . . rather, they didn't think me important enough to detain me as a prisoner. My husband

gave me the message to deliver to you at all hazards . . . for the sake of the army, for the sake of the Confederacy, for the sake of his honour."

"How did you get through the Union lines at the tavern?"

"I fell in with a body of scouts from General Early's corps."

"But General Early has no corps."

"He was appointed to-day in place of General Hill, who is ill. They were looking for a road and captured me. We made up a ruse by which they pursued me nearly into the Union lines. The Union troops came out to fight them and I got this wound in my arm here."

"What was the name of the Confederate officer?"

"Elson."

"Do any of you know him?" asked the general, turning to his staff.

"I do," answered one.

"I have his letters and watch and ring here," said Ariadne, drawing them forth.

She handed them to the general, who glanced at them quickly.

"What's this?" he asked, holding up one of the papers. It was Manning's note to secure her passage through the Union lines. "Pardon me," continued the general, "I must make sure." He read the note carefully. "This does not bear out your claim, madam," he said finally, "a Federal safe conduct!"

"And, General," broke in Captain Wittington, "she was with a Yankee regiment when we ambushed them and drove them back with heavy loss."

"I supposed you had, from the firing," said Stuart. "Madam, this doesn't fit in with your start-

ling story. Have you any other evidences as to who you are?"

"Yes," said Ariadne, after thinking deeply. "I have." She brought another paper out of her bodice, a worn paper. She thanked God she had had forethought enough to bring it with her that afternoon. "Here is a letter from the President of the United States."

"Is he vouching for you?" said Stuart, in greater surprise than before.

"It will show who I am. My husband belonged to Pickett's division. He was badly wounded at Gettysburg. I went North to seek him. The President gave me this letter. It says who I am."

She handed it to Stuart.

"Madam," said the general, after reading it over, "I have heard of your story. I believe you now. Can you describe Captain Grafton?"

Describe her husband? Every feature was printed on her heart. Rapidly she told the general of Grafton's perfections. There was a genuineness, a spontaneity about her description, that brought a smile to Stuart's face and covert laughter to some of the others who watched the strange scene.

"You have convinced me at last, absolutely," said Stuart.

"Thank God for that. Am I in time?"

"I think so."

Just then a courier dashed up as rapidly as the darkness and the trees permitted.

"General Stuart!" he cried.

"What is it?"

"The Yankee cavalry has already seized Spottsylvania Court House."

Stuart looked thoughtful. If Ariadne were not what she pretended to be, if the orders that scat-

tered his corps and detained him where he was were not genuine, he would be ruined. The enemy would soon occupy the Piney Branch Church Road, they were already upon the Brock Road and the Catharpin Road, and now they had seized Spottsylvania Court House in his rear. He had no doubt that by recalling the regiments, like that of Colonel Green, which he had sent scouting, and massing his force, he could seize the Court House, or break through the Union lines, but if he did that he would leave all the roads open. It was a grave matter to depend upon a woman's word and a man's judgment. Every staff officer appreciated it; indeed Ariadne appreciated it herself. The general, who was not given to hesitation, considered the subject for a brief space.

"I believe you and I shall carry out the orders," he said finally. "General Lee," he turned to Fitzhugh Lee, one of his division commanders and a nephew of the commander-in-chief, "you will take your division and hold the Brock Road. The men are to be dismounted, the horses to the rear. I will give you Major Breathed's guns. You are to obstruct the road, conceal yourself in the woods, throw up any kind of breastworks you can, and hold back the Yankees at all hazards. You would better hold one brigade in reserve to protect your right flank in case the enemy comes down the Piney Branch Church Road. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," said General Lee. "Shall I move at once?"

"Immediately."

"Very good, sir. Come, Breathed," he said to another gallant young officer, scarcely more than a boy, whose achievements with the horse artillery were the marvel of both armies.

"General Hampton," continued Stuart, turning

to another officer who had heard all, "you will move south by the blockhouse road and advance as far to the west toward Shady Grove Church as you think safe. If possible, cover the junction of the Church Road and Catharpin Road. I cannot give you any guns. The main attack will be on the Brock Road, but you must do the best you can. Don't let the enemy flank you down the Catharpin Road. You are to dismount your men also and on no account use them other than as infantry, whatever the temptation. Do you hear that, Lee?" he called after the general, who was mounting his horse.

"I do, sir," answered Fitz Lee; "although my boys won't like it, your orders shall be obeyed, sir."

"A cavalryman on foot is like a sailor on shore," said Stuart, "but this time it can't be helped. Where is General Rooney Lee?" he continued, referring to W. H. F. Lee, his other division commander and the son of the commander-in-chief.

"Here, sir," answered that officer.

"I shall keep Barringer's brigade of your division with me," said Stuart. "You will take Chambliss' brigade and ride back toward the Court House. You are not to bring on an engagement with the Yankees there, but must prevent them attacking Hampton, or Fitz Lee in the rear, if they advance. You are only to observe, but the duty is a most important one. All three of you gentlemen will find me here with Barringer's brigade, which I shall hold as a reserve to be sent in wherever it is necessary. But for God's sake don't send for them unless you are in the last ditch. You understand what you have to do? Go ahead, then. I should like to be with every division and I think it's the first cavalry fight in the army that I haven't led in, but in conducting these complicated operations," continued Stuart, laughing

like a boy, "over such a large extent of territory, I shall have to stay at the centre of events. Good-bye and good luck to you. The salvation of our army, and our country," he added with a sudden gravity, "depend upon you. I know that I can trust you."

The officers saluted and turned away. In an instant the woods were filled with commotion as the troops were called to attention and the brigades began to move.

"Captain Wittington, ride back to Colonel Green," said Stuart, "and tell him what the movement is and that he must hold on to that branch road. If he is driven in he can rally his men here. But he must not be driven in."

"We'll hold it, General, depend upon us," said Wittington, turning away to deliver his message.

General Stuart was left alone with Ariadne. She had been listening with intense attention to the conversation.

"Madam," said the general, "you see I trust you."

"You do well, sir; you will never regret it."

"Do you understand the purport of my orders?"

"Every one of them, sir. They are exactly what I told you to do."

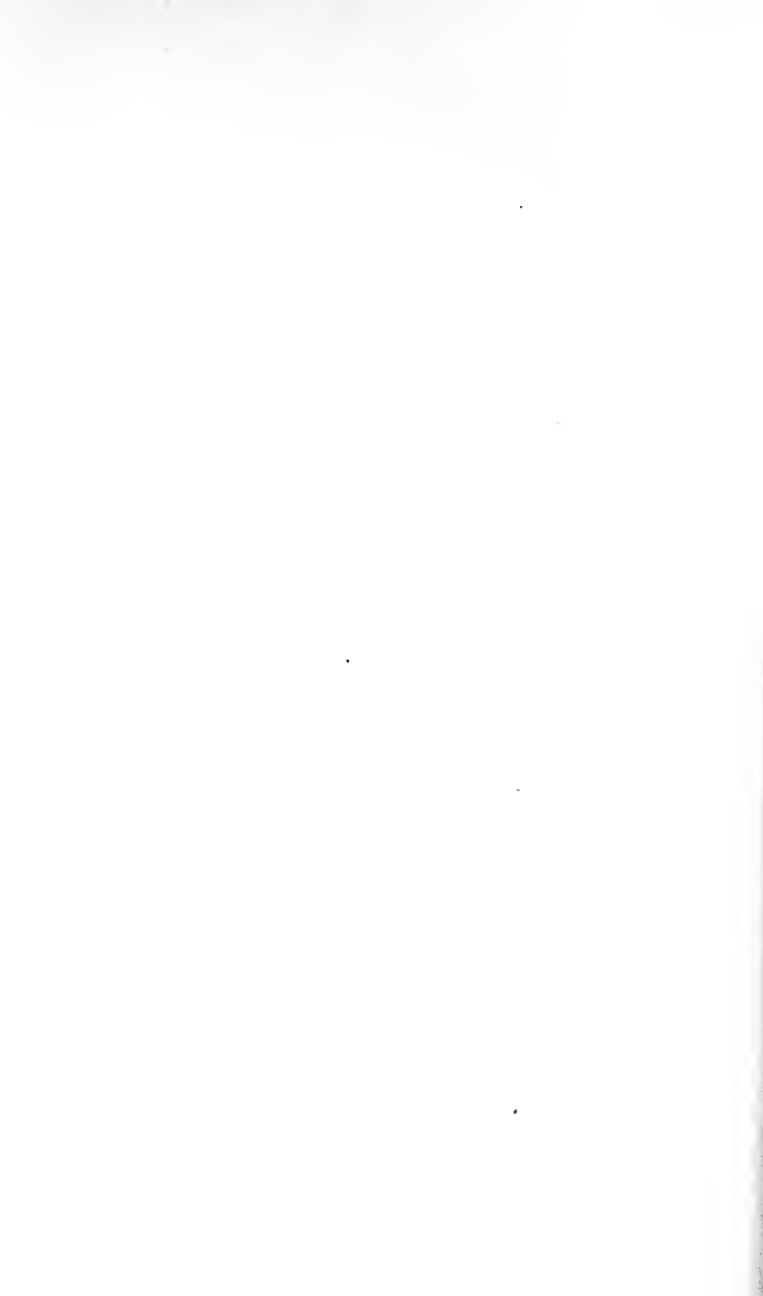
Stuart laughed.

"By Heaven," he cried, "you ought to have been a soldier. Grafton is a lucky man. You are the best general of us all."

But Ariadne was very far from being a soldier, for, as the general spoke, there came to her a consciousness that her errand was fulfilled, that she had saved the Confederacy—her husband's honour, and that there was no necessity for her to bear up any longer, so she gently collapsed then and there.

BOOK FIVE

“Lee’s Miserables”



CHAPTER XXV

THE MAN AGAINST THE GUN

HARRINGTON was a daring young soldier, and he pushed far south on the Catharpin Road until he arrived at its junction with the Shady Grove Road. There he divided his force and sent one moiety under a veteran sergeant to the west, while with the other he advanced to the eastward. Each party was to proceed cautiously and after inspecting the road for a mile or so was to return to the junction where they separated. Grafton was left alone at the junction with the remaining sergeant and half a dozen troopers. The sergeant had orders to withdraw into the wood a short distance and seek a suitable place of concealment where they might pass the night. He was enjoined to guard his prisoner carefully.

He carried out his instructions to the letter. Forcing a way back through the underbrush for a few hundred yards the sergeant came across a small natural clearing which he decided, with the eye of an experienced soldier, would do admirably for a camp when the other detachments joined him. He left Grafton severely alone, save for the presence of his armed guard, who stood constantly by him, ready to shoot him at the first movement, while preparations were made for the encampment.

It had become dark long since, but the sergeant did not dare kindle a fire. The men ate from their haversacks, sharing a portion with Grafton, and then all but the sergeant and his guard stretched themselves out for a nap. About ten o'clock a picket

which the sergeant had placed at the junction came back and reported horsemen approaching.

They proved to be Captain Harrington's own detachment. They had ridden five or six miles down the road and had seen absolutely nothing. Shortly after his arrival the other sergeant came up with his party. He reported that a large force of the enemy were marching down the Shady Grove Road, not more than five miles away. He stated that he had experienced great difficulty in bringing his own men off without being observed.

The Federal captain concluded that he had pushed his reconnoissance as far as was prudent, and the best thing for him to do now would be to return and report to the troops, which must by this time have occupied Todd's Tavern and the Brock Road. The horses of the fatigue party were saddled and the whole troop trotted rapidly up the Catharpin Road, over which Grafton had galloped eight hours before.

It was not after twelve o'clock at night and very dark. Confident that his enemies were all behind him, ignorant that there was a road from the west that led into the Catharpin Road, Harrington advanced as rapidly as his tired horses admitted, and, with less care than usual, kept a somewhat negligent watch ahead. Accordingly he ran into a carefully prepared ambush engineered by the advance of Early's corps and led by the remnants of Elson's troop. There was a sharp *mêlée* in the darkness. Harrington was shot, with one of his sergeants and several of his men. The remainder of his troop scattered; some took to the woods, others raced back toward the Shady Grove Road, some were captured; as an organised force the troop was wiped out.

The *mêlée* freed Grafton. As he made no effort to escape, of course the Confederates grabbed him

unresisting. He asked for the captain of the detachment and to him declared his name and rank. After some difficulty he persuaded this officer that he was really what he claimed to be, an officer on the staff of General Lee charged with a message for General Stuart, which should have been delivered six hours before. In establishing his identity he was helped by the story told by the men of Elson's detachment about the assistance they had rendered Mrs. Grafton, and his assertions were borne out and generously seconded by the Union captain, who was dying.

That girl up North, like the girl down South whom Elson had remembered, would never see him again. The war which he had deplored and for the termination of which he had sighed a few hours before, was over for him sooner than he had fancied—and in a different way. He lay on the ground breathing heavily, dying from a shot through the lungs. Some one held a lantern over him and Grafton knelt down by his side. The young man, scarcely more than a boy, was trying to speak.

"Captain," he whispered, "those letters . . . you will see that she gets . . ."

"I will," answered Grafton.

Death was an everyday matter in the army, but it never came home personally to any man without his being deeply affected by it, and this soldier of the enemy, although he had frustrated Grafton's errand, had saved the life, the honour, of his wife; and Grafton was profoundly touched.

"You will find the address there . . . tell her . . . I died . . . for my country. Could . . . you . . . say . . . a prayer, do you . . . think?"

Grafton had never prayed for any one before, that

is, he had never voiced any one else's prayer in public, and he felt a natural hesitation, a false shame in doing it now, but the request was one that he could not refuse. He took off his hat and the men of the detachment followed his example.

"What shall I say?" he asked nervously.

"I guess anything'll do . . . so long . . . as it's . . . a prayer."

Grafton was a Churchman and, like all Episcopalians, he was familiar with the splendid liturgy of his church. But he was as one stricken dumb at that instant. He could not remember a single one of the familiar prayers.

"You will . . . have to . . . hurry," whispered the dying man painfully, "if I . . . am to hear . . ."

"Lord," began Grafton desperately, "be merciful to me . . . a sinner."

It was a strange phrase, yet perhaps there could be none better on a man's lips when he appears before his final Judge.

"Lord" said Harrington very slowly. "That's . . . good. A sinner . . . be merciful . . . to me."

That was all. Grafton rose to his feet and faced the officer.

"I must go to General Stuart," he said, "if it is not too late. Can you give me a horse?"

"Take any one of those we have captured," said the officer, "although horses are scarcer than men, and a blamed sight more precious."

It used to be after battles and skirmishes, so it is said, that commanders asked each other first of all, "How many horses did you lose?" and then after exchanging comparisons, "What were your casualties among your men?" Yet men were scarce, too,

in those struggling days when the Confederacy was slowly being constricted to death by Grant's tremendous columns.

Aided by the lantern, Grafton picked out the best horse, and, bidding the commander of the detachment good-bye, galloped on ahead of him down the Catharpin Road. He knew that it would be perfectly futile to try to reach Todd's Tavern now. The Union troops must be there in force by this time. He intended to strike down the Shady Grove Road, turn north at the Blockhouse Road, in the hope of intercepting Stuart, in case his wife should not have been able to deliver the message. He was thankful for what he had heard of her progress from Elson's men. The anxieties that had overwhelmed him during the long hours while he had been a prisoner were immeasurable at the thought of Ariadne, alone, wandering around that wilderness, in danger from friend and foe alike, seeking Stuart, with possibly the Union army in possession of the roads.

He had lost much time and could not spare the horse. Hence he rode him like one possessed. If he could reach Stuart by daylight he might not be too late, but the way was long and the horse was very tired. It was dawn before he came to the bridge at the old Block House. As he hurried down the hill toward the little valley of the Po he saw a cloud of dust in the road below, and above it the nodding figures of horsemen. His own horse was literally at the end of his strength. There was nothing he could do. He was on a bare hillside. There was no concealment possible. To escape, if there was a necessity, was not to be thought of.

Grafton therefore went down the hill. The approaching troops might be Union cavalry, although the chances were against it. At any rate he must go

on. As he approached the horsemen nearer he saw that they were Confederates. Instinctively he put spurs into his horse, but the brave beast was done for. He faltered and fell dying, as Grafton leaped from him and ran down the hill to the bridge, at which he arrived just as the first regiment of Hampton's advance crossed it. The men stared hard at him, but he explained that he was from General Lee, and demanded to see their commander. In a few moments Hampton stopped before him.

"Captain Grafton!" he exclaimed, recognising him at once.

"Yes, General. I have orders from General Lee to General Stuart. Where is he?"

"Back on the Brock Road near Alsops, I believe."

"Are you retreating?"

"Does this look like it?" laughed Hampton, pointing ahead.

"General Lee says that General Stuart is . . ."

"Oh, you needn't bother to deliver that message. We've had it."

Grafton's heart leaped in his breast.

"Did my wife get there?"

"She did. And told us late last night just what you would say. I'm down here to cover the Shady Grove Road."

"Longstreet is marching toward you. He can't be more than a dozen miles away now, and Early is coming down the Catharpin Road. He will be here during the morning."

"Good," said Hampton; "I guess we won't have to fight for it."

"I don't know about that. The Federal troops are in force at Todd's Tavern and will probably come down the Catharpin Road. If you get there before

Longstreet or Early does, you'll have a chance at them."

"We'll get there," answered Hampton jovially. "Fitz Lee's division is on the Brock Road holding back the advance that way."

"He's sure to get in it!"

"Yes, he's got all the luck this morning."

"Where is the other division?"

"One brigade of it is facing Spottsylvania. The Yanks are there. The other brigade Stuart has in the centre of events ready to reinforce everything."

"And my wife? She was all right?"

"Well, she got battered up a little in getting through the Union lines."

"General, for God's sake tell me exactly what's the matter with her."

"She has a flesh wound in the arm, the left, another in the right shoulder, and a gash across the forehead—pretty bad for a woman, but we wouldn't mind it."

"Where is she?"

"We left her with General Stuart."

"Can you give me a horse?"

"Well, I'd rather give you anything else," answered Hampton frankly, "for they're scarcer than hen's teeth and . . ."

"I must get a horse!" said Grafton. "I must go on."

"Where do you wish to go?"

"Up to General Stuart's headquarters to . . ."

"I see. Well, I guess I'll have to get one for you. I think there are two or three spare ones belonging to me. Take any one you wish."

"Will you sell one?"

"No," said the general decisively; "I couldn't put

a price on one. If we both get out of this war alive you can give me another. If I get killed, he's yours."

"Thank you," said Grafton.

"Any man that's got a wife like yours, Grafton, can have anything the cavalry can give."

Grafton wrung the general's hand and turned away. In a few moments he was mounted again and riding north along the Blockhouse Road. It didn't take him an hour to find the place where Stuart ought to be, but he was not there. He had distributed the regiments of his reserve brigade where they would do most good at the beginning of the battle, and then had rejoined the front. No one at Alsops knew anything about Ariadne. There was nothing for Grafton to do but to ride on and find Stuart.

He found him surrounded by his staff on a little hill which commanded a view—so far as a view could be had through the trees—for several miles in every direction. In front of him in the woods Fitz Lee's line was engaged. Grafton dashed up to him and after the briefest of salutes, such was his anxiety, asked him where his wife was.

"In that house off to the left there on that road yonder, just back of our fighting lines," returned the general, pointing at a house on a clearing over a mile away.

"Is she all right, sir?"

"Well, in the first place, she was physically utterly exhausted by all she had gone through; in the second, she has three nasty little wounds, not one of them serious, but very annoying. She fainted after she delivered your message last night, and I had her carried to that house, which I noticed at dusk. There was an old negro woman there who hadn't been

frightened away by this fighting, and she promised to take care of her."

"You have had General Lee's message, I see."

"Every word of it. I tell you no man on earth could have made it more clear than that magnificent girl. By Jove, Grafton, I want to tell you that you have a wife in a thousand, and if she ever needs help from anybody but you, I am hers to count on."

"Thank you," said Grafton; "may I ride over to see her?"

"Certainly," replied Stuart. "I think you'd better get her out of that house, if you can. There's a road that leads up past it and I've been expecting every moment to see some of those Yanks make their appearance on it. I have no troops, not even a man to put in it to guard it, but what could I do? I'm practically surrounded here now. You know the Yanks are in force at the Court House."

"There are not many of them there," said Grafton confidently. "It is probably a division of Sheridan's cavalry."

"One is too many for us at this juncture. But if these fellows in front of us would let us alone we'd soon clear the Court House."

"Longstreet and Early are advancing. They should be here some time to-day. They'll make short work of them if you can only hold this main attack on the Brock Road."

"My men don't like beetle crushing," said Stuart, "but by Heaven we'll hold the Yanks as long as there's a man left to crawl behind a log and pull a trigger. Eh, Jim?"

He turned to Breathed as he spoke. The commander of the horse artillery laughed softly.

"We're just waiting for orders to go in," returned that young gunner.

“Breathed is my last reserve, Grafton,” said Stuart familiarly; “when I turn him loose the Yankees would better get to cover. You should have seen him fight yesterday and the day before at Todd’s Tavern. But go on, man, and look for your wife.”

Grafton saluted and turned away. He ran rapidly down the hill until he got to the bypath back of the hastily improvised breastworks behind which the Confederates were holding back the Union advance. He turned to the right and darted up the road. A few hundred yards away there was a large clearing; a great house had been in the centre of it once, but had been burned, and the clearing was bare of buildings save for one little whitewashed negro cottage. It was there that his wife had been taken.

As Grafton approached it he was startled beyond measure to observe the wood on the edge of the clearing several hundred feet away from him suddenly alive with horses and men. A section of artillery broke through the trees and wheeled to the front. Grafton had a repeating rifle which he had taken from one of Harrington’s men.

As he saw the gunners prepare to fire the piece he realised that they had got in such a position that they could enfilade and make untenable the right of Fitz Lee’s division, which had not observed the danger. Before Grafton could ride back and warn the men the gun would open fire.

The little house in which his wife lay was so near the line of fire that a carelessly aimed shot might demolish it. Grafton’s first impulse was to gallop to the house. His second was to warn Fitz Lee. Neither proposition was practicable. There was but one thing he could do. He could fight the battery. This would perhaps save his wife, alarm Lee, and bring Stuart to the rescue.

He leaped from his horse, threw the bridle over the branch of a tree, and stepped out in the open, rifle in hand. The weapon was a brand new one of the latest and most approved pattern. Grafton had filled his pockets with cartridges, and he was a dead shot. He took deliberate aim and pulled the trigger. One of the cannoneers fell. Another took his place and Grafton sped another bullet into the group. Another man fell. Now, the cannoneers expected to get hit, of course. They had deliberately exposed themselves in the dangerously open place to secure the advantage of a raking fire, but as one after another was shot down before their gun could be discharged, they perceived that a sharpshooter of some kind had their range, and at the fourth shot they marked him standing boldly in the open on the other side of the clearing.

There were no infantry supports with that piece of artillery at the time; some bold youngster—why was it that most of the artillery commanders in both armies were such young men?—had conceived the desperate design and was carrying it out on his own hook. They were well within range of Grafton's rifle, but they had no weapon with which to return his fire save the cannon. The place was untenable unless that pestilent "Johnny" standing there in the open, composedly fighting them, could be put out of the way.

The trail piece was whirled around and a canister shot which had been intended for the fighting line was fired at him. In their hurry their aim was poor. By a miracle Grafton was untouched by the storm of bullets. He fired rapidly again and again into the smoke, making some of his shots tell. The report of that cannon called the attention of Stuart to that end of the line. Through a vista in the trees he saw the

whole performance, Grafton standing there alone fighting the cannon. He could see more than Grafton, too; for beyond the gun, which was being reloaded for another discharge against the lone soldier, he marked other sections of some battery and a heavy column of infantry, or dismounted cavalry. The Union commander had quickly backed up the young artillerist's audacious move, perceiving the importance of the position.

"Breathed," said Stuart to his subordinate, "look yonder at Grafton. It's up to you now. If you don't hold those fellows back we're outflanked and we'll have to retire in a hurry."

Breathed, his eyes shining, had already turned to his men. He shouted a command and the pieces raced madly down the hill. After a moment's hesitation Stuart followed them. He was met halfway down the slope by a staff officer from the front.

"General Fitz Lee's compliments, sir, and he is outflanked on the right. Unless you can hold back the enemy there, sir, he will have to retire."

"Tell him to hold on. Breathed and I will attend to the right."

The officer in command of the single gun on the right realised that it was a waste of opportunity to pay any more attention to Grafton. The men would have to stand and take their medicine if they were not to lose the chance of crumpling up the Rebel right. The gun was slewed again until it pointed into the woods at the line of breastworks. Although Grafton kept up his fire with telling effect the cannon sent a screaming charge of canister into the open flank of Fitz Lee's men.

They rose to their feet and began to give back, at the same time the Union troops in front—dismounted cavalry, like their antagonists—made a dashing

charge upon them. The fate of that little battle depended on that instant. Breathed's guns saved the day. They whirled into action on the edge of the clearing and concentrated their fire upon that reckless gun. It was knocked to pieces and dismantled in an instant.

"Well done, Breathed," cried Stuart as he marked the effect of the discharge; "but load, load quickly! See, here they come!"

Cannon are no use against men skirmishing in the open or against a single individual, like Grafton, but against men in mass at a proper range they are simply irresistible. Breathed's brawny gunners, throwing off their coats and standing naked to the waist, worked their guns like demons. The advance of Warren's corps, the Sixth, broke through the trees in dense columns. They were trying to outflank the Confederate lines. Breathed's guns hurled canister and shell into them, tearing up the front in fearful gaps and driving them back into the woods again.

But no cannon unsupported by infantry can fight infantry very long. The position the Federals had won, and to gain which they must have wiped out Colonel Green's regiment, was such as to render untenable Fitz Lee's line. Supported by Breathed, the Confederates on the right had beaten off the Federal charge, and Stuart took advantage of the respite to withdraw his line some distance back where his right was covered by a high hill. Here the Confederates entrenched again with skill begot of long experience, and here the little battle was continued until the arrival of the head of Longstreet's corps changed the state of affairs.

The Federal advance was checked, their troops were driven out of Spottsylvania Court House by Longstreet's rear divisions, and Hampton, who had

been engaged in holding back the Federal troops on the Catharpin Road until Early's men seized it, retired, and the cavalry corps was united again.

With them was Grafton, frantic with anxiety. He would have run across the zone of fire to the little house to which his wife had been taken had not Stuart held him back by main force.

"You can do her no good," cried the general. "It's sure death to go out there, and you're too good a man for us to lose. God will take care of her. You can do no more."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MERCY OF THE GREAT CAPTAIN

GENERAL LEE arrived at Spottsylvania Court House on the 9th. To him Grafton at once reported.

"Captain Grafton," said the general, "I find General Stuart has carried out my orders. It is evident that my message was delivered. I have heard from others of the brilliant fighting of the cavalry, and that they have succeeded in holding back the Union advance and giving us this place is due in large measure to your intelligent carrying out of my orders. I shall recommend you for promotion. The service you have rendered your country has been invaluable, sir."

"General Lee," said Grafton, paling under his sunburn, "I . . . I . . ."

"What is it, Captain?" asked Lee kindly.

"I deserve nothing . . . nothing . . . of what you have said, sir."

"Were not my orders given to General Stuart?"

"They were, sir."

"Did not you . . ."

"But not by me."

"By whom, then?"

"By my wife, General Lee."

"I do not understand."

"I have to confess a dereliction of duty, sir."

"Explain yourself, Captain Grafton."

It was a hard thing to have to face that incarnate greatness, by whom the sacrifice of Brutus, or of Virginius, if it had been required, would have been

cheerfully emulated, and confess that which Grafton's honour compelled him to disclose.

"After leaving you, General," he began desperately, "I met with no adventure until I reached the Catharpin Road. I concluded to try that in the hope that the Federal troops had not occupied Todd's Tavern, and I could save a great deal of time that way. About halfway to the tavern I heard a woman scream for help. Just where a small branch road turns out of the Catharpin Road to the left. I stopped . . ."

The general shook his head.

"I can understand the appeal of a woman in trouble," he said, "but there are times . . . go on, sir."

"I am happy to say, sir, that I did not turn aside from the road at first, although to refrain from it was the hardest task I ever essayed."

"You did well."

"But, sir, as I started on a man burst out of the bushes, a negro, and begged me to come to the rescue of his mistress, who was in the hands of guerrillas. You know what that meant?"

"I know," answered the general.

"What I should have done I cannot say, but I recognised the man as Judge Lewis' former body-servant, who had been with my wife. He said that it was she who was in danger. I had not seen her for a year . . . she had disappeared . . . I forgot . . . everything. I put spurs to my horse, dashed up the road a short distance, turned into the clearing, and found her struggling in the arms of some human brutes. I surprised them, managed to kill two or three and took shelter in the house with her. They tried to storm the house, then burn it. They would have killed both of us had not a squadron

of Union cavalry come up the road and put an end to the whole thing. They saved our lives . . . my wife's honour . . . but captured me."

"But the orders? How were they delivered?"

"They did not hold my wife prisoner. Before they took me away I told her what you told me. She knew the country thoroughly. She had been living there since she left Richmond, and she comprehended everything wonderfully. She said she would deliver the orders to General Stuart."

"And did so?"

"Yes, sir. Late that night the detachment of horse covering General Early's advance had the good luck to capture that Union party on the Catharpin Road. I was released, got a horse and rode on to General Stuart. I found him yesterday morning. He told me, as General Hampton had *en route*, that my wife had delivered the message late the night before. I was present in the fight that took place while he was holding back the Union advance. That's all, sir. I know that I should have placed the orders above everything else."

The general nodded his head.

"And that by turning aside even for the most powerful personal appeal I jeopardized their delivery," continued Grafton accusingly. "And that if the orders were not delivered in some way the safety of the army would be seriously jeopardized and our country perhaps ruined."

The general stared at his young subordinate with a steady, intent gaze and a somewhat forbidding countenance, but he said nothing. What he would better do was a puzzle to him. He waited further developments without interrupting his already overwhelmed staff officer.

"No one can accuse me more severely than I do

myself, sir," continued poor Grafton, writhing in spirit in the situation, "and I place myself in your hands for any disposition you may wish to make of me."

"General Stuart's compliments, and he would like to see you, sir," said Colonel Taylor, at that moment coming into the tent in which this conversation was taking place.

"Beg him to enter at once," said Lee, with that unvarying courtesy which distinguished him on all occasions.

"Shall I withdraw, sir?" asked Grafton.

"Wait."

An instant later the opening of the tent framed a splendid picture. Stuart was the beau ideal of a cavalryman and a cavalier. His uniform was beautifully made of the finest English broadcloth. It fitted him like a glove. By some miracle he had kept it reasonably clean amid the dust and exposure of the hard campaign. The lace was slightly tarnished, but it was lace still. His faithful servant had used every opportunity to keep his high cavalry boots, the tops of which were embroidered in gold, brilliantly polished. From the hat which he held in his buff gauntleted hand a long scarlet plume depended. It was held in place by a gold star. With his blue eyes, blond hair and laughing mouth he was a splendid sight to look upon.

He was in great contrast to Lee. They were both men of handsome type, but different. One was dashing, light-hearted, careless, free and easy, a bold rider and hard fighter, a splendid horseman. The other was a tremendous personality of such strength, dignity and power that he towered like a Roman emperor among his brilliant contemporaries.

“Congratulations, Stuart, on the brilliant way in which you carried out my orders. It is due entirely to your splendid fighting and your quick comprehension of my plans that we are able to reach this most advantageous position. We should have been out-flanked but for you.”

“When you lay a plan, General, we’re the boys to carry it out,” said Stuart, smiling with pleasure; “and if I may take the liberty, I congratulate you on the choice of a messenger.”

“Captain Grafton?” asked Lee interrogatively.

“Oh, Grafton be hang . . . beg pardon, Grafton . . . I refer to Captain Grafton’s wife, General Lee. She got through the Union lines, was three times wounded, and yet arrived safely and delivered the orders. She had a terrible time of it, but it takes Southern women to do things like that. If the supply of men gives out, as it most likely will, I propose that we ask the women to ‘Jine the cavalry,’” said Stuart, chuckling, with a twinkle in his eye, humming the first bar of that merry little chorus.

But General Lee was in no mood for trifling.

“General Stuart,” he said, “I gave the orders to Captain Grafton. I impressed upon him the necessity of delivering them without delay and at all hazards. I enjoined him to let nothing whatsoever distract him from his purpose for a moment even. I pointed out to him that upon the delivery of those orders and your carrying them out depended the salvation of the army, the Confederacy. Captain Grafton heard a woman scream for help along the Catharpin Road. Although it was his business to deliver those orders and to allow nothing to deter him, he turned to succour this woman.”

“Who was this woman, may I ask, General?” questioned Stuart.

"My wife," said Grafton, standing very erect, clenching his hands to keep back his emotions.

"Did you know that she was your wife when you went to her?"

"I did."

Stuart turned to Lee, a look of pity and appeal in his eyes.

General Lee went on in measured tones.

"Captain Grafton had not seen his wife for nearly a year. She had left him at Gettysburg, for reasons which do not reflect upon her or him, and which we will not go into further . . . which you will not refer to, of course . . ." Stuart nodded. "When this appeal was made to him he plunged aside to rescue her from imminent danger to life."

"And honour," Grafton ventured to interrupt again.

"I beg your pardon, but don't forget that, General," urged Stuart, perceiving whither all this tended.

"I shall not," returned Lee, who wished above all things to state the case fairly. "He was captured, of course, and prevented from delivering that message. Indeed his wife barely managed to get it to you. Captain Grafton, seeing that his wife was not to be made prisoner, told her the orders and she promised to deliver them. In some way she managed to get through."

"She looked as if she had been drawn through death and destruction when she came fainting into my camp," said Stuart.

"She is an honour to Virginia, to the whole South, and the story of her ride, when it is known, will be an inspiration to the soldiers of the army," went on Lee gravely. "Being ignorant of the circumstances, I had just congratulated Captain Grafton upon his

brilliant achievement. He very honourably told me the story I have told you and placed himself in my hands. He has committed a serious breach of military duty. What do you advise me to do?"

Undue leniency was General Lee's greatest fault. It was the one blemish upon his brilliant record as a leader that he sometimes seemed to lack that ruthlessness which measures out well-merited severity to subordinates who jeopardized the safety of a cause by incompetency or contumacy. He knew that he was severely blamed for this mistaken mercy, and in this instance he really wished some encouragement to be kind and overlook Grafton's breach. Hence his sudden reference of the matter to Stuart. From one point of view Lee could not have appealed to a worse man than the impulsive gallant chief of cavalry. From another point of view there was no better to whom to leave the decision.

"Do?" blurted out the cavalryman. "Forgive him, for his wife's sake, sir."

"I do not wish to be forgiven for my wife's sake," said Grafton haughtily. "I know what I have done, and that I merit punishment."

"Grafton," said General Lee suddenly, "were the thing to be done over again, would you heed such an appeal from your wife again?"

Grafton answered without hesitation.

"God forgive me, sir, I couldn't resist it."

"It may be all wrong from a military point of view, General," said Stuart quickly, "but if I had a man in my division who wouldn't have done the same thing to prevent his wife from being outraged by those ruffians, I'd have him cashiered and driven out."

Lee put up his hand.

"There speaks the cavalier," he said reprovingly,

yet fully understanding the other's feeling. "It's not in that way battles are won and causes established. Grafton was wrong, but the temptation was terrible. The appeal was a fearful one, I grant and I . . ."

"General, one moment, please. Did you know that Captain Grafton finally reached me and that single-handed he fought a section of artillery alone?"

"What do you mean, General Stuart?"

"I put his wife in a little cottage beyond Alsops. She was in no condition to move, and I had to leave her there under the care of a negro woman. When Grafton did join me on the morning after his wife delivered the message, he wanted to know where she was. I told him off to the left of our line. He rode down there to see her. The Yanks rushed a section of artillery to enfilade the line. They would have smashed in General Fitz Lee's right with terrible loss if it hadn't been for Grafton. He had a repeating rifle that he got from some Yankees when he was recaptured and he stood out there in the open and fought that gun alone until Breathed's artillery came up. I saw him, sir. They just got there in the nick of time, too, for Warren's corps broke into the clearing, and if it hadn't been for the delay that Grafton caused, Breathed's battery would not have been there to hold back this charge. They would have got Fitz Lee enfiladed and have torn my lines to pieces in spite of all we could do. In that case, General, you wouldn't be where you are to-day."

"Why didn't you tell me of this, Captain Grafton?" asked Lee.

"It had no bearing on my previous action, sir," said Grafton simply.

"I see."

"And I must admit that I was fighting as much for my wife as for the cause. I was afraid a shot

from that gun would strike the house and kill her."

"That's not all, General," continued Stuart. "He fought like a tiger with the guns. Major Breathed told me himself, and I was a witness to it. They drove Warren's division back, but they brought up heavier artillery and forced me to retire to a second line. That open space was swept by a torrent of bullets. He wanted to go out in that fire and get his wife, or at least die with her. I told him he was too good a man to lose and that it was his duty to stay with us, and he remained."

"Where is Mrs. Grafton now?" asked Lee.

Stuart shook his head, but did not answer.

"I suppose she's killed, sir," said Grafton, choking back a sob. "I could stand her death, but . . ." He stopped, unable to go on.

"I pray God she has escaped," said Lee. He stretched out his hand to the young captain. "Come, it was wrong, I must say that. But you atoned amply by your gallantry in this action. I pardon you freely. Your wife's ride has saved your honour, and your rank. Let us say no more about it. You will not discuss this conversation with any one, General Stuart?"

"Never."

"And I shall be equally reticent," said Lee kindly. He was always happy to do a kind act, and he only wanted an excuse to pardon Grafton. The young officer could have gone on his knees to his adored chieftain. He only shook his hand and turned away. Stuart grasped his great commander by the hand and shook it vigorously.

"By heavens," he exclaimed, "General, it's no wonder the whole army, from the highest down, would be glad to die for you!"

Lee smiled, and the smile was a rare one in those days of trouble, and turned to Grafton again.

"Don't give up," he said; "I have a feeling that Mrs. Grafton will be restored to you. She has done much for her country, and we may hope and pray that God has her in His keeping."

"I hope so, sir," Grafton answered; "and, General Stuart, I want to thank you for your kindness to her and to me."

"Now, Stuart, what next?" said Lee, as Grafton shook Stuart's hand in turn.

"With your permission, sir, now that I've got my rough riders mounted and together again, I'd like to go after Sheridan, who is heading for Richmond, I believe."

"Go, and may God go with you," answered the general solemnly.

The two generals shook hands once more. Stuart nodded to Grafton and left the tent. They heard him humming as he left headquarters his favorite air, "Jine the cavalry." They both thought of his gay, ardent nature, his brilliant bearing, when three days later the news came that he had died, as he craved, at the head of his men in the bloody battle with Sheridan at Yellow Tavern.

Grafton went out of the tent presently, an utterly hopeless and desperate man. Lee had not reassured him. The cup of happiness had been held to his lips and dashed aside. Ariadne had saved Lee's army; she had saved the Confederacy. She had saved her husband's honour, but she was gone! He could not escape the conclusion that she had laid down her life for those three great things, that as she had lived to love him, so she had died to save him. The anguish of separation had been great. The days in which he had craved a sight of her, longed for the moment

when he could tell her that he had made a great mistake and that he loved her, had been almost unendurable, but they were nothing to the mental torture he had to endure now.

He found relief in nothing but action. Lee, understanding this, kept him busy. He was with the general in the trenches at Spottsylvania on the night of the 11th of May. There had been prodigies of fighting all along the great crescent of the Confederate lines covering the position Lee had elected to defend, and every time the overwhelming assaults of the Federals had been beaten back with terrific loss, although the defenders had by no means paid little for the line to which they so tenaciously clung.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SALIENT IN THE LINE

THE Confederate lines at Spottsylvania Court House were traced in the shape of a great irregular crescent which ran roughly from west to east for half their length and then bent around to the south, the chord of the arc connecting the two ends of the circle being about four miles long. Nearly in the middle of the line, or at the north-east point of it, a tremendous salient half a mile wide at its base ran the same distance almost due north and south, culminating in a blunt obtuse angle. The existence of such a salient in such a line was a grave mistake. Its one advantage was that it was an excellent position for artillery.

The Confederate lines had been formed under fire, however, and in running them in the somewhat haphazard methods necessitated by the fact that they had to be placed during action, advantage had been taken of the topography of the land, which had been followed, as was usually the case, in disregard of strict engineering principles. Wherever the ground was found to be defensible the trained soldiers usually seized upon it and rapidly threw up temporary breastworks, which, when connected with other similar coigns of vantage, and strengthened, constituted the main line which the army must defend. Nor had there been in the two days of continuous battle much opportunity for rectifying the crooked, irregular lines. The tremendous assaults delivered by Grant and his overwhelming force could only be resisted by the most superhuman efforts on the part of the Confed-

erates. They had no time for anything but fighting. To cling to the line they had made was a necessity. And it was commonly observed that when the men selected their own line they held it better than when it was traced by the engineers. They seemed to feel a certain affection as well as a responsibility for it, and it was difficult or impossible to dislodge them from it.

Lee was as keenly alive as his officers to the vulnerability of the salient, and had given orders that a line of works should be built across its rear, so that in case of necessity it could be abandoned without impairing his main line of defence. Such few men as could be spared from the fighting line had been at work upon these new lines, but they were yet in a very incomplete state. Meanwhile the works in the salient had been strengthened by the men who held it until they were the most formidable in the whole line—which was proper, as the position naturally invited attack. The non-military reader will understand that once a line is effectively broken at any one spot the whole line becomes untenable, and the defending army must retreat under circumstances of terrible disadvantage, or be broken to pieces and annihilated where they are.

Grant, in the previous fighting, had tried both flanks of the line, and, finding them impregnable, had decided to concentrate a force and endeavour to break the line at the tempting salient. For this purpose he selected Hancock's corps. There was no finer corps in his army than the famous Second Corps commanded by Winfield Scott Hancock; indeed, there was no more splendid body of fighters in the Army of North Virginia itself than those Hancock had led in so many battles. By natural selection under fire he had assembled a body of soldiers who would go

anywhere and do anything that a captain could ask of humanity. They may be fitly compared to Pickett's famous Virginia division. And it may be remembered that it was Hancock's men upon whom the assault at Gettysburg had fallen, and it was they who had repulsed the famous charge.

The heavy losses of the Federal troops were constantly made good by the arrival of fresh troops—when Lee lost a man his place could not be filled. Consequently Hancock was able to bring to the assault the full strength of his corps, numbering in all perhaps twenty thousand men. Early on the evening of the 11th of May he was ordered to withdraw from his position on the extreme right, pass around the rear of Warren's and Sedgwick's corps, who were to extend and occupy his abandoned lines, to the Brown Farm, a clearing about three-quarters of a mile due north of the apex of the Confederate salient. The open ground extended from Brown's Farmhouse to the face of the salient, the distance between the bordering groves of trees on either side being about four hundred yards.

The advance of Hancock's troops reached the Brown Farmhouse about midnight. The march had been made over a terrible road in a pouring rain. The weather conditions would have taken the mettle out of any but veteran and tried soldiery. The night was dark as pitch. Hancock spent the hours until four o'clock, the designated moment, in placing his men. When the time for the assault arrived it was still too dark to see, and he therefore waited until four-thirty-five. Taking directions from a white farmhouse, the McCool house, seen dimly just within the Confederate lines, at that moment he ordered the advance.

With Barlow's division in two close lines of masses,

Brooke's and Miles' brigades in front, Brown's and Smyth's in the second line; with Birney's division in two double lines of battle on Barlow's right; with Mott's division in the rear of Birney, and Gibbon's division in reserve, the order was given to march forward. There were no obstacles in front of Barlow's division, his way being where the ground was open and clear. Birney's division had to wade through a morass and force its way through a rather open piece of woods. By hard marching they kept abreast of the troops in the open and all approached the salient together. As they converged upon it they naturally crowded together in masses of increasing density.

Certain threatening movements of Grant's left, made for the purpose, had caused Lee to believe that the next attack would fall on the right of his own line. He had therefore withdrawn most of the artillery from Ewell's troops, who held the salient. During the early part of the night General Edward Johnson, who commanded the division at the apex, had become convinced that his own front was menaced, and he had sent to Lee and asked for the return of the guns. Accordingly, orders had been sent to the artillery to be back at the salient at daybreak. The batteries were even then coming across the rough country at a gallop. The men in Johnson's division lay behind the breastworks ready for whatever might be demanded of them. The sentries were alert and watchful. Pickets were posted three or four hundred yards in front of the lines.

The works here had gradually been made very strong. The usual rough-and-ready fortifications made use of by either army as occasion demanded were merely shallow ditches with the earth piled up in front of them. Around the salient, however, the

trees with which the country abounded had been cut down and banked with earth to a height of about four feet. Along the top of the embankment a head-log rose on stones, or wood blocks, so as to leave an open space of about three or four inches between it and the crown of the earthwork, as a sort of continuous loophole for firing through. In front of the work there was a rude abattis, or slashing, improvised from sharpened tree branches; not much of a protection, but still sufficient to annoy and perhaps check an assailing enemy when backed by such a fire as was certain to come from the veteran defenders.

The ground outside the lines sloped downward gently for about forty yards, and then it rose in still more gentle ascent all around the position. Within the salient the country was more open, although the farms and meadows were interspersed with clumps of trees. Outside the lines, save for two or three farms, the ground was marshy and heavily wooded. Little water courses, full from the heavy rains, ran here and there.

As became the commander of the most advanced and exposed section of the line, Johnson was awake early on the morning of the fatal 12th of May, and was engaged in an inspection of his men and lines before daybreak. Mounting the works, he stared northward through the grey, dull mist of the morning—the rain had stopped for the time being, but the mist was almost heavy enough to be called a storm—toward the Union lines. As he did so his ear caught the sound of distant cheering. It came to him dull and faint in the heavy, sodden air. What could it mean? Why should men be cheering there at that hour? There was no snapping of pieces from his pickets—indeed the Union advance had been so rapid through the dense fog that the men in the advance

simply swallowed up the guards in front of them before they had a chance to fire—but Johnson was enough of a soldier to realise what that cheering, which was drawing nearer, meant. The assault he had anticipated was about to be delivered. Where were those missing cannon? He threw one glance back into the salient; they had not come. It was day, and they were not here. It was day and the enemy was at hand. He would have given his life for the guns. Well, he must do his best without them.

Instantly orders and shouts rang along the Confederate lines. The men sleeping on their arms rose to their feet and made ready. For a moment they stared into the impenetrable fog, while the cheering came nearer and rose higher. An instant later and the grey cloud was tinged with blue. An instant later and dark masses of men shouldered their way through the mist, buffeting it aside as the bows of a ship a wave, and fell like an avalanche on the Confederate lines.

Fortune had favoured them. They had reached so near the lines before they were distinguished that although the breastworks blazed with sudden fire on the instant and many fell, the momentum of the solid mass of twenty thousand men struck the line as a great breaker crashes upon a shore. The first ranks of the assailants were beaten into a human spray; men stumbled and fell in the abattis, only to be trampled into human pulp by their overcrowding comrades, as the wave of inundation swelled on, merciless, irresistible, overwhelming. The human torrent crushed through the abattis, surged over the breastworks and, bayonet in hand, fell upon Johnson's men. The fighting was close and ghastly—with the bayonet mainly. The Confederates resisted desperately, but no line of five thousand that were ever mustered could

contend with four times their number in mass, especially when without cannon. In a short time those who were not killed or wounded were captured; included in the latter category were Johnson and another Steuart, the two general officers. There had been no surprise, simply a mighty, irresistible smash through a weak point brilliantly if unsuccessfully defended. The long lines of dead indicated the vigour and persistence of the defence. Their valour had been unavailing, however, for Hancock had at last broken the line!

Back of the second line of entrenchments that were being thrown across the base of the salient Lee had his headquarters. The sound of the battle in the early morning apprised him of what was happening. There was not a continuous roar of small arms punctured by artillery, but one long smashing volley, and then a strange sort of silence broken only by spattering shots, by yells and cheers that came to him faintly. He understood instantly. It could only mean that the Union troops were over the line and using the bayonet. There was no time or room for musket or gun fire. So swift and so sudden had been the terrible onslaught in the fog that but two of Johnson's remaining guns had been able to fire a shot before they were all captured.

It was evident to Lee that his line was broken. Just where and in what force the enemy were he could not yet decide. Some place on the salient, of course. A staff officer from the front galloped up and confirmed the news. In his excitement, with pardonable exaggeration, he declared that there must be forty thousand men already within the Confederate lines and that they had complete possession of the whole salient. Sending his staff officers in every direction to summon reinforcements, Lee galloped through

numbers of flying stragglers, whom he attempted in vain to rally, toward the salient. Gordon's division had been previously ordered to reinforce Ewell's troops in the expectation of some such catastrophe as this, and Lee knew that they were stationed near the base of the salient. They were the troops which had been erecting the second line of defence. Followed by a single staff officer—Grafton—Lee, on Traveller, his famous grey horse, rode at a tearing gallop for this splendid division.

And well he might ride fast and hard, for if the Federal troops had succeeded in seizing the salient, unless they could be driven out of it, or confined to the positions which they had now taken until the new line of breastworks at the rear of the salient had been so far completed that it could be held, the army of Northern Virginia was irretrievably ruined. If Grant could maintain his advantage and pour in his troops through that gap, by turning to the right or left, as the case might be, they could take the Confederate lines in reverse, and no troops on earth could resist them. The Army of Northern Virginia, the Confederacy, would end right then and there. Indeed it might be too late to save the army even by such prodigies of valour as he might expect from the men he had so often led to victory.

The cheers of the Federal troops grew louder as Lee raced toward the enclosure of the salient. They were evidently approaching the second position. The situation was even more disastrous than it had seemed at first. Far to the right and left of him the roar of guns told him that Grant was endeavouring by assault and cannonade to prevent the detachment of troops from those wings to reinforce the broken Confederate centre. If Grant could hold the Confederate troops on the right and left in their places in their

entrenchments, his great preponderance of force would enable him to overwhelm the reserves that Lee was hastening to the danger point, the disaster would be converted into a rout, and then God save the Confederacy, for nothing could avail!

The situation was patent even to the private soldiers in the army, much more to the officers. Rhodes and Ramseur, of Early's corps to the right of the salient, had already gotten their troops in line, when a staff officer galloped up with Lee's commands. Best of them all, Gordon, a young man who had entered the war as the captain of an infantry company and now commanded a division, and who went out at Appomattox in the front of the last battle line in a position second only to that of Lee and Longstreet, was quick to see the necessity. Without orders he deployed his division in line of battle and was about to move forward when Lee galloped on the field. The face of the great captain was set and firm. There was no lack of composure in his bearing, but the light in his eye, the uplift in his face, signified a desperate determination, nay rather, a great resolve.

Taking off his hat he rode his splendid grey horse to the head of the line, looked back at the men, and wheeled toward the Union lines. His purpose was patent to all. Realising the supreme effort required to save the day, he was about to lead those brave Georgians in person against the victorious enemy. It needed, in the general's mind, his personal presence to inspire this small division with ability to hurl back, or even hold in check, that enormous mass of men. It was the supreme moment of the war, and unless he could master it, he would go to a great death at the head of his men. He would win a victory or he would not survive a defeat.

Over to the right as he took this position he saw

the missing cannon. The horses were on a dead run, the cannoneers were yelling like fiends. As they bounded over the uneven road the muddy cannon leaped, banged and smashed through the air as if they had been projectiles themselves. It was much lighter now, and although the mists were still heavy, the field of battle could be distinguished.

Some slight works in the rear of the McCool house held by one of Gordon's slender brigades had temporarily checked the enemy. In the excitement of the charge and the deadly hand-to-hand fight which had ensued before Steuart's line had been overwhelmed, the men of this division did not surrender until their arms had been literally torn from them and they had been borne down by sheer weight of numbers. It was hoped this delay would enable the artillery to get into action. They saw the guns whirl to the front in battery, but before they had a chance to fire the Union troops were upon them and the first detachment of artillery was captured in the twinkling of an eye.

All these movements, however, had taken time, and Hancock's corps had become badly disorganised in the advance and the fierce fighting, and had naturally gotten entirely out of control. They came surging through the salient enclosure more in the nature of a mob, or a series of mobs, by this time than anything else, expecting to take the broken line in reverse in the direction of the Court House and end things out of hand.

Lee turned to his men. At that juncture Gordon, who had been at the other end of his own line, galloped over to where Lee was restraining his impatient horse. With a reckless disregard of military etiquette he threw his own animal squarely across the face of Traveller. Reaching out his hand he caught

the bridle of the general's horse and checked him. Lee flushed and started to speak, when Gordon, shouted out in a voice that could be heard half a mile away, and which was heard—as he designed it to be—by every man in his advance:

“General Lee, you shall not lead my command in a charge! No man shall do that.”

He fairly hurled the words at his astonished commander, not giving him time to answer.

“The men behind you are Georgians, Virginians, North Carolinians,” he cried, his voice rising tremendously as he spoke. “They have never failed you in any field. They won't fail you now. Will you, boys?”

The men didn't cheer then in answer to that question. They simply roared.

“No, no, no!” came from the line; “we'll not fail him!”

“General Lee,” shouted Gordon imperiously, while yet the response echoed through the dull air of the morning, “you must go to the rear!”

He recognised the value of that life. Lee must be saved at all hazards, else whatever happened they were indeed lost. Under no circumstances was the great captain to be permitted to sacrifice himself like an ordinary soldier. Lee must go back!

Instantly the words were caught up by Gordon's men. They were greeted by the Rebel yell certainly, but this time it was not the incoherent, thrilling shriek so filled with menace which animated the men who voiced it, and gave pause to those who heard its terrifying cadences. It was this shout,

“General Lee to the rear! General Lee to the rear!” repeated again and again.

The men dashed forward and grasped the general's horse and strove, in spite of his involuntary

effort to prevent them, to turn his face to the rear. Indeed they crowded around Traveller so closely that they actually started to turn him and then push the horse backward by main force. If necessary they would have taken horse and man and carried them both bodily to the rear. They were quite in the mood for such an achievement. It was such an evidence of affection and devotion as few captains had ever received on a battlefield.

Lee used to say whimsically that he never really discovered where was the proper station of the general-in-chief in action, for wherever he went during the course of a battle some officer was sure to remonstrate with him, and the words that he heard most frequently when fighting was going on were these:

“General Lee, this is no place for you, sir; you ought not to be here!”

There was nothing left for Lee but compliance. He shook his head and slowly forced his way out of the ranks, taking position on a little hillock where the whole division could see him. He was as fearless, as reckless of death, as the commonest soldier, and they knew it. His hold on those men was irresistible. They could do anything now, and they would.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE BLOODY ANGLE AT HELL'S HALF-ACRE

WHILE the impression of the scene was still upon them, Gordon gave the word "Forward!" The division, enthused to the sublime, struck the disorganised and scattered troops of Hancock with tremendous force and drove them back, stubbornly contesting every foot of the way, the resistance growing stronger and stronger as the blue men were crowded together by the constricting walls of the angle. But Gordon was not to be denied. Slowly his men pressed on. The stress and strain were terrific. There was more hand-to-hand fighting over the ground that Edward Johnson had occupied that morning. Many a man, wounded and unable to get away, fell and was trampled to death by the press of feet.

As Lee had withdrawn from Gordon's front at the imperious behest of that gallant young commander, he had sent Grafton, who had witnessed the whole scene with a feeling almost of awe, posthaste to bring up some more artillery to take the place of the captured guns. After a few minutes' fighting, which Lee watched, with his heart in his mouth and a prayer on his lips, for if the Federal troops did not give way before that charge, if Gordon's men failed, all would be lost, he saw with relief indescribable Cabell's artillery coming up on the run. They wheeled to the right, the officers saluting, waving their swords, shouting as they saw Lee on old Traveller, and dashed into action.

By this time Rhodes and Ramseur had also swung

into the salient in a series of hurtling charges, and added their onslaught to the tremendous thrust of the Georgians under Gordon. By prodigious efforts they finally forced the Union troops out of the salient and over the works. But no further. To one side of that narrow line of earth and logs the maddened men in blue clung with the grip of an octopus. Upon it the frantic men in grey threw themselves with the demoniac energy of enraged tigers.

It was daylight now. All that long grey day, with the rain whirling down on them, the soldiers fought for that line. The Confederates had cleared the salient and regained all that they had lost except the extreme angles. They could not dislodge the Union troops from the outer face of that portion of the line, nor could the Federal soldiers in turn drive them from the inner face. With six feet of earth separating them they struggled through the long hours.

It was not a series of charges and countercharges, of successive advances and retreats, as was usually the course of engagements. It was not a battle in which the fortunes of war wavered from one side to the other, but it was a straight, continuous, steady, hand-to-hand fight of over twenty hours' duration, and of such a character as beggars description. Never before, never since, was there a battle like it.

Men stood behind the breastworks firing until they were shot down. Guns were run forward, by hand, after the horses had been killed, from either side, and fired until their very carriages were cut to pieces by musket fire. The sponges were dipped in blood which dropped from the iron muzzles as from a ravening animal's lips. Men drank the sickening compound in their consuming thirst in default of water. The slopes on either side were piled with men past action forever, to whom no one gave heed. The

trenches were filled with dead, the ditches with blood. The horrible mud was mixed with trampled human lives. Wounded men fought with the ferocity of tigers or the courage of lions at bay, until they could fight no more.

Fresh troops were brought up constantly, although they were subjected to a fearful shattering fire from the guns placed far enough back from the works on either side to shoot over friend and into the foe. Still that breastwork was lined with men, who fought on with no note of time, knowing that the last hour would strike presently for them. Opposing colours were planted on it face to face and waved there until cloth and staffs were shot to pieces.

In the frenzy of their passion men would leap on the breastworks and fire down into the trenches on the other side. Sometimes their comrades would pass up gun after gun, which the heroes on the works would fire until they were shot down. Bayonets crossed, sabres were rammed through crevices and openings in the breastworks, and the men were as mad. The redoubt smoked like a volcano, writhed like a serpent, bled like a heart. And over all the rains fell and fell. In the whole history of warfare there never was such a prolonged, desperate battle period of fierce hand-to-hand fighting since the world began.

Neither side would give way. Officers and men fought side by side; organisation was lost. It was not needed. Each man was soldier and captain at once; and the sole need was to fight, to fight with parched lips and sobbing breast, until merciful death stayed the hand.

The rifle and musketry fire was of such fierceness and intensity that the air was filled with sheets of lead and steel. A deep, continuous humming sound

dominated the field—the song of the rifle bullet, the Æolian harp of death. A large tree back of the lines was cut down by musket fire and fell. Gun after gun was put out of action because everything wooden about it was destroyed by the small-arm bullets. The headlogs on the breastworks were shivered into paint brushes. The reeds and rushes and weeds and underbrush were cut down as cleanly as though they had been mowed.

The heroism on both sides was so great that the battle, in spite of its horrors, was an epic of magnificence. Every soldier on that dead line that lived from hour to hour because it was constantly remanned with fresh victims, was a hero or a demon. With faces ghastly white from fatigue, with mouths powder-blackened from biting cartridges, with bodies covered with mud from the gunstocks, until they could not tell blue from grey in the rain, the men fought on.

The Union troops were not withdrawn while there was a hope of driving the Confederates away, for if they were forced back from the lines again the Army of Northern Virginia would be lost. The Confederates would not be hurled from their position, for their salvation depended upon keeping the Union troops at bay until the lines in the rear could be completed. So the best troops of both armies were concentrated on either side of those lines in a struggle which needs the pen of Homer or the brush of Verestchagin to describe it.

Meanwhile, far back of the salient, toiled frantically the wounded, the sick, the teamsters, the camp-followers, every one who could handle a spade, or an axe, or even shovel the earth with a tin cup. Lee's personal presence sometimes animated these humble toilers. He rode from place to place, from

fighting line to working line, encouraging all, filling his men with unconquerable determination, with an ardour that nothing could quench and by which, as welcome night came on, the terrible wrestle ended in a victory for them.

The first success of the Federals had been nullified by the sacrifice of the Confederates. The battle gradually died away, leaving each army in possession of the face of the angle it had fought for. About three o'clock in the morning humanity could stand no more. There was silence on the field. What remained alive of the Confederate divisions that had held the line retreated from the Bloody Angle and occupied the new breastworks that had been built across the base of the salient, leaving to the Federals the now useless works. The battle was over, the Confederacy was saved—but at a terrible cost.

Grafton had distinguished himself on that fatal field. He had received permission from Lee to go forward to the angle with one of the reinforcing lines late in the afternoon, and he had fought with them until the withdrawal that night. By one of those coincidences which so often occurred in battle, both lines had made a simultaneous attempt to swarm over the crest just at dusk. Grafton crossed swords in the smoke and excitement with a Union officer. Their blades rang viciously together, and then a flash of recognition leaped into the faces of both men.

“Kirkwood!” gasped one.

“Grafton!” answered the other.

Neither could hear a word in the tumult, but their lips framed the words. They lowered their weapons, but the next moment a maddened man who had been fighting by Grafton's side thrust his bayonet into Kirkwood's breast. A shell burst on the breastwork, from which side no one could tell, and when

the smoke cleared away Grafton was alone. He emptied his pistol into the Federal ranks immediately below him. A hundred muskets were fired at him and bullets sang around him until friendly hands reached up and dragged him back to the Confederate side. He had been grazed in half a dozen places, but by a miracle was not hurt. Other hands had caught Kirkwood, a colonel now, as he had fallen, and had drawn him back from the crest of the hill. Grafton did not know what became of him—whether he lived or died.

He was the saddest man in the army that night as he thought of his lost wife. Although he was utterly exhausted as he threw himself down on the wet ground near Lee's headquarters, he could not sleep. He thought and thought of Ariadne. And the fact that his best friend had been practically killed under his very eyes did not lighten the burden of his sorrow.

To complete this tale of the fighting in "Hell's Half-Acre," as the soldiers called it, the next morning the Union troops occupied the lines which had been so bitterly contested for. On both sides they found them piled with dead in the ditches to the height of four or five feet, a solid mass of bodies. Here and there convulsive movements, a muffled moan, indicated that there was some life in the horrible heaps.

The possession of the field and the honours of the conflict remained with the Federals, but they were barren honours, for behind the new earthworks lay the veterans of the South as grimly at bay as they had been before the great assault of Hancock.

CHAPTER XXIX

AFTER SPOTTSYLVANIA

ARIADNE was fearfully ill and weak. Not only from the, to her—to any woman—agonising wounds, but from the nervous exhaustion induced by the tremendous exertions which she had undergone. General Stuart and some of his staff officers had carried her to a little hut in a neighbouring clearing—the best they could do for her—and had committed her to the care of an elderly negress, who, although frightened to death by the arrival of the soldiers, refused to be dislodged from the miserable hut she called her home.

She nursed and cared for the girl as best she could. Ariadne was too ill to be moved the next day. There was no place for her to go; the Federal troops were all around her, and back of Stuart's men they still held the Court House. The reaction had set in, and she hardly cared what became of her for the time being. She heard the roar of battle close at hand, but it did not come nearer as the day drew on. If it did, she could not help it. She had so drawn upon her nervous force the day before that she was a complete physical wreck, almost a mental one. Her head ached fearfully from the wound in her temple, the wounds in her tender flesh, so hastily and imperfectly attended to, gave her excruciating pain.

Had it not been for Philip's sake she would have wished herself dead then and there. No one came near them from either army, and late in the morn-

ing the old negress came in from a reconnoissance she had undertaken and declared that unless they wanted to be killed they must get out of the house and seek shelter somewhere else.

"I's be'n out in 'de gyarden," she remarked, "an' I see de sogers comin' in dar"—she pointed out the north of the clearing. "Dey's a-comin' right dis way an' dey got a gret big gun wid 'em."

Ariadne hardly had the strength and resolution to do so, but, urged by the old woman, she got up from the bed and started toward the door, through which she could see what was occurring. With her keen intelligence she knew at once what was about to happen. That section of artillery unlimbering on the edge of the woods was trying to take the Confederate line in reverse. She saw, too, that the line of fire ran some distance from the hut and that unless the gun were badly aimed they were in no immediate danger.

Her first instinct was to warn the Confederates of the blow which was about to fall, but she realised that it would be impossible to warn them in time. She had no horse, she could not walk. She watched the approaching gun in helpless anguish. The negro woman was looking the other way.

"Heh cum our folks," she cried, suddenly pointing.

Ariadne wheeled swiftly and stared through the adjoining window looking south. A single man was stepping out of the trees. He wore a grey uniform. Ariadne had been almost blind with pain, but there was an illumination in that presence. It was her husband; she recognised him at once. He had escaped, then; he was alive. He had come to warn Stuart, to seek her. But what was he doing there? Alone? She could not imagine until she saw him

lift his rifle and fire. Then she realised that he was fighting that gun alone.

For the moment Ariadne forgot her wounds, her anguish, everything, and thrilled at the sight of that cool and splendid figure. She guessed that he had come to take her from the house and that he had seen the artillery and was making a desperate attempt to check it temporarily. She saw the Federals wheel the piece and fire on her husband at last. She covered her ears with her hands at the sound of the report and tried not to look toward the window until the old negress, who had been watching the scene with eager eyes, exclaimed:

"Dey didn't git him? He's doin' hit agin. Look! Heah cum de res' un 'em."

She saw Breathed's guns come up on the gallop, marked them swing into action, then she lost sight of her husband in the smoke.

"Dey's mo' Yanks yander," cried the old woman, pointing through the door; "we got to git outer heah somewar."

There was a little cellar under the house, a hole rather, scarcely large enough for the two women. Thither the older woman half led, half carried Ariadne by main force. There they remained while the tide of battle rolled around them. The hut between the two armies was hit again and again during the hot little fight, but no piece of shell or canister injured either woman. Ariadne lay as one dead in the arms of the kind old black woman. How long she remained there she did not know; the minutes seemed hours, the hours days, and she had lost count of all.

Finally the Federal troops drove back the Confederates. The battle swept by them; they could hear it far to the right and rear. At last they ventured out. By this time Ariadne was nearly dead.

She was in the grip of a fever and half delirious when a large body of Union cavalymen rode past the house. The general in command stopped his horse and asked for a drink of water. The old negress, who answered his hail, stared hard at him. He looked a kindly man, and, knowing that she must trust some one, she determined to ask his assistance.

"Mister," she said, handing him a gourdful of water, "der's a young lady in heh. She's all shot up an' I spec she gwine to die ef sumbody doan tek sum notice un her."

"Take my horse, orderly," said the general, instantly dismounting and following the old woman into the hut. The next moment he recognised Ariadne, while she in turn was greatly surprised and not a little relieved to see that he was General Manning.

"Why, it's Miss Lewis!" he cried in amazement. "How did you get here?"

"I do not know, sir."

"Dey fotch her las' night, all shot up."

"I will send a doctor at once," said General Manning, "and we'll see what can be done. Will you stay with her?" he said, proffering a gold piece to the negress.

"I doan' want none er dat, suh," said the old woman proudly. "I'se Confed'it, I is. I'se gwine ter tek keer er dis young lady as long as I kin' stan' up."

General Manning summoned his brigade surgeon to look after Ariadne, posted a guard at the hut and gave instructions that her condition was to be reported to him wherever he might be camped for the night. Rest, care, and good nursing were all that Ariadne required, the surgeon declared; and the ma-

terial portion of this Manning supplied from the boundless resources of the Union army, and the old negress did the rest. The day after that Manning himself, whose brigade was not engaged at the time, came back to see her. He found a very pale and wretched woman, but one recovered in part from her terrible shock.

"Miss Lewis," he began as he entered the room.

"General Manning," said Ariadne, "I deceived you."

The general looked thoughtful.

"My name isn't Lewis," she went on. "It used to be, before I was married."

"Married! You! What is it now?"

"Grafton."

"You're not Philip Grafton's wife?"

"I am."

"Then you're not a Northern sympathiser at all?"

"No."

"And that dash into our lines was"

"A ruse."

"I did that young Confederate captain an injustice," said Manning, reflecting upon what he had said about the other's pursuit of the woman.

"You did," said Ariadne, "and I longed to tell you the truth to clear his memory, but I could not."

"There must have been serious cause for you to risk life and your escort to get into my lines."

"There was. I had to get through."

"I see."

"I had a message for General Stuart."

Ariadne knew that no harm would be done by disclosing her story, and she really was anxious to tell the whole truth to this officer, who had been so kind to her. It was a relief to tell the truth, after the

past necessity for so many falsehoods, and she felt it a sort of belated atonement as well.

"My husband is on General Lee's staff. He had orders to General Stuart to hold you back. He was captured, but I escaped and delivered the message."

"Upon what little things battles depend," mused Manning. "If it had not been for this woman Stuart would have retreated or gone away on some wild raid or other. We would have seized Spottsylvania Court House. Lee's army would have been flanked, he would have been cut off from Richmond, and forced to retreat or attack our overwhelming force with his depleted battalions."

This had all been frustrated by Ariadne's dash and daring, her shrewdness and devotion. But Manning bore no malice. He could respect such qualities even in a foe. And no one could cherish animosity toward this poor, wounded, fever-racked, stricken woman, yet still for all that she had sustained, looking at him out of her beautiful eyes with some of the old pride of Ariadne, the dauntless.

"You outwitted me fairly," said the general, smiling, "and while I am of course chagrined, it is impossible for me to be angry with Philip Grafton's wife. By the way, I have a message for him in my pocket." He hesitated.

"A message? From whom?"

"My wife," said Manning gravely.

He could understand what value the message would be both to Grafton and his wife under certain circumstances. But he must know all before he delivered it.

"Tell me," he said, "your husband . . . You see I know something of your story."

It was very hard for Manning to go on, and Ariadne helped him.

"I fled from him, as you know," she said, "but he found me day before yesterday."

"He is . . . is it"

"He loves me," said the woman simply, understanding Manning's query. "If I only knew that he were safe I'd be the happiest woman on earth."

"Good," exclaimed Manning, his course clear now. "My wife begs your forgiveness. She gave me a little packet which I was to give to your husband or to you, if by any chance I fell in with either of you. I carry it always with me. Here it is."

He took a small parcel from his breast pocket and handed it to Ariadne.

"Is it . . ." began Ariadne, "are you"

"I am as happy as you are, Mrs. Grafton," said the young officer impulsively, laughing like a boy, understanding her as she had understood him. He reached out his hand and met her small one, giving it a vigorous shake.

The package was addressed in Kathleen's handwriting to "Mrs. Philip Grafton, in care of her husband, kindness of General Manning." With nervous fingers Ariadne tore it open. There was nothing in it but a locket. Kathleen's locket, that her husband had worn. The recollection of the scene in which it had played so prominent a part came over her with a rush. She dropped it in her lap. What had Kathleen intended, she thought, by sending it to her? How had it come into her possession, in the first place? What had she meant by returning it to Ariadne? Had Philip given it to Kathleen? Did it mean that Kathleen had sent it back to Ariadne as a token that she had cast off Philip? How could any one ever stop loving him? she thought, indignantly, with a flash of charming inconsistency.

"You'd better open it," said Manning, smiling at her and comprehending something of her thoughts.

Her trembling fingers fumbled at the catch and finally he had to come to her assistance. He placed the open locket in her hand. She had fearfully expected to see Kathleen's picture, but lo! a little chubby face stared at her.

"What is this?" she began in bewilderment.

"Can't you see? It's a baby," answered Manning, smiling like a great boy, as he always did at that picture, a duplicate of which, with Kathleen's face opposite, he carried in his pocket.

"But whose baby?"

"Mine and Kathleen's."

"But why did she send it to me?"

"You are the baby's god-mother . . . or rather, you're going to be, and we've named her after you."

"Then it is a girl?"

Manning nodded.

"Ariadne Manning. See?" There was a little scrap of paper in the locket. Manning took it out and held it forth.

"For Ariadne" was written upon it, "from Kathleen. Love me and forgive me."

Ariadne leaned back in her chair and stared at the general.

"You see," he began, "we are indebted to you for all our happiness. It was your trust and your example that opened Kathleen's eyes. She did love your husband once—and who could blame her? He's the most splendid fellow on earth, but after you came and after you left her, well, she opened her eyes and saw some of the merits of my unworthy self. Mrs. Grafton, I cannot thank you enough. She said that whenever she looked at me she thought of you, so straight, so dauntless, so true, so unhappy. Some-

how, it seems strange, she turned to me. Then when . . . the baby came . . . and it was a girl we both thought of you. Are you glad?"

"I am very glad, very happy," quivered Ariadne, comprehending at last; "or I would be if I could only know where Philip is, if he is alive. I did nothing. It was Kathleen's innate nobleness of soul, that was all, that . . . that saved all . . . of us."

"Now," said Manning, manlike anxious not to plunge too deeply into a scene, "what are you going to do?"

"I don't know. Can I get back into our lines?"

"It is absolutely impossible," returned the general. "In no way could it be brought about. I wish you would go North. Kathleen is in Fredericksburg, but she is going back to Pennsylvania. She will be glad to take you with her. You can't stay here."

Poor Ariadne had been so buffeted by fortune that she was incapable of much resistance now. She demurred, but Manning was persistent. He said, which was perfectly true, that were conditions different she would have done the same; and he promised, if it were possible to get tidings to Philip, to let him know. Ariadne had to comply for the present, for she was too weak and too helpless to be left alone. Back to Fredericksburg she went.

The day after Spottsylvania General Manning, who had told the story to General Grant and received his permission, sent an officer to the Confederate lines under a flag of truce. He himself followed Sheridan to meet Stuart, so he had to trust his message to one of General Meade's staff officers. The Confederate officer who met the flag received a note from General Grant to General Lee. When Lee opened it he found a brief letter from his great an-

tagonist, asking, if no military exigency prevented, that he would deliver the enclosed note to Captain Philip Grafton, if such an officer were still on his staff. If so, and an answer was to be made, the officer who brought the note under the flag would be glad to take it back. It was a most unusual request. Lee, however, surmised what the tenor of the note would be. He called Grafton and placed it in his hands. Grafton opened it, and, recognizing Manning's handwriting, read:

“DEAR OLD FELLOW:

“Your wife is wounded, but not seriously, and is in our lines. I have prevailed upon her to go back to Pennsylvania with Kathleen. You will be glad to know that Kathleen is the most devoted of wives and has an admiration for your wife second only to that she feels for our little daughter, her namesake. She will take good care of her until, well . . . until we can meet under happier circumstances. Your wife refuses to determine anything until she hears from you. If she can get word that you are safe and well her own recovery will be certain. You will be sorry to learn that Burt Kirkwood was seriously stabbed at the Bloody Angle. Kathleen and your wife are taking him back. I would have brought this letter in person, but we of the cavalry must always be moving. May God speed the day when we can meet face to face in peace. Your old friend and classmate, who never forgets you,

GEORGE MANNING.”

Grafton laid the letter before Lee.

“This is not necessary, Captain,” said the general, with his usual consideration.

“But I ask you to read it, sir,” said Grafton;

“you know the story, and I wish you to know this chapter as well.”

“General Lee handed the letter back after he had read it and turned to his aide.

“A manly officer,” he said; “I am glad Mrs. Grafton has fallen in such hands.”

“What shall I say to her, sir?”

“Tell her to stay there. Write your reply, but be brief about it,” was the kind answer.

“Thank God, Manning,” wrote Grafton, “that my wife is safe. Tell her that I am still unharmed. That my honour was saved through her magnificent heroism. She will understand. Tell her to stay with you and your wife, and may God bless you both forever. She must wait until the war is over, or I can arrange to have her brought back to the South. I congratulate you on the little girl and on the love of one of the finest women in the world. You know how happy I am, or if you don’t, ask Ariadne. I have something to live for now. Good-bye.

“PHILIP GRAFTON.”

CHAPTER XXX

THE ROBINGS OF GLORY, THE GLOOM OF DEFEAT

“WELL, Colonel Grafton?” exclaimed the general, as Grafton rode up to him one morning in April almost a year after the battle of Spottsylvania Court House.

The young staff officer, who had been promoted to his present rank in the closing years of the great struggle, checked his horse abruptly and saluted. At a rapid gallop he had come back from the front, where fierce fighting was still going on. The emergency admitted of no delay or he would have spun the moments into hours before approaching his great commander-in-chief with such a message as he had to deliver.

The year that had elapsed had been one of ruin and disaster. There had been victories, to be sure. Never had the Army of Northern Virginia fought more superbly, never had the skill of its commander been more wonderfully exhibited than in the long death grapple from the North Anna to Petersburg, and in the race from Petersburg to Appomattox. Starved and naked, worn away by the attrition of Grant's ceaseless grinding and hammering, a mere handful stood at bay that sunny April morning, striking in hopeless despair, but with all the dash and daring of old, against a circle of enemies that ringed around them as a pack of wolves a dying lion.

From the east, from the west, from the north, from the south, came the roar of battle, painfully nearing the centre where Lee stood with his staff.

Behind them, miles away, lay a prostrate, ruined town. A once proud little capital in the ashes of humiliation and destruction. Ahead of them ran the mountains they longed to reach, to the south of them their brothers in arms were reeling back from the tremendous shocks of Sherman. But between Lee and the South, between Lee and the West, lay the war dogs of the Union; the quarry that had been hounded from Gettysburg to Five Forks was almost brought down. Pressed from the rear, assailed on the right and left, with the way barred in front, the Army of Northern Virginia was trying desperately to break through anywhere. The wave of advance rolled on, but it was now a shallow, seething spray about beaten to pieces against the inexorable rocks of an indomitable determination whose name was Grant.

In all that fighting Grafton had borne a splendid part. He had participated in the battle at the Crater at Petersburg. He had charged with Gordon at Fort Steadman. Carrying orders to his old division commander he had fought with Pickett at Five Forks. He had narrowly escaped capture with Ewell at Sailor's Creek. This morning Lee had sent him forward to the front of the line, where Gordon commanded, to find how the battle went and what were the chances of success.

Now he was coming back to tell his chieftain that inevitable defeat, nay, annihilation, stared him in the face and could no longer be staved off even by his genius and his army's courage.

Twice during that long time Grafton had heard from Ariadne. She was well, she was with Kathleen Manning, who loved her. She longed to be with her husband. She might have managed to get a pass through the President of the United States,

whose kindness to her had never been forgotten; but Grafton, with the deadly picture of starvation and misery in Richmond constantly before him, had sunk his own desires in her welfare and had peremptorily forbidden her to seek to enter that doomed town.

Unless a miracle from heaven came to pass the Confederacy was hopelessly ruined when Lee essayed to defend Petersburg at the command of an executive which short-sightedly valued a place above an army. Grafton, for one, realised that the only hope was in foreign intervention, which it was now patent would never take place.

Conditions were terrible in Richmond in the summer and winter of 1864. Ariadne had suffered enough, and although he would have given the world to have seen her, to have taken her in his arms—now that he loved her—he charged her with all the solemnity that in him lay to stay where she was and wait. Because she loved him she obeyed him.

Both the times he heard from her through spies and secret service messages, her letters had been pleas that she might come to him, and although his heart seconded the wish, he turned a deaf ear to the appeals. Thus, while her husband starved and fought, while her sisters sunk and died, Ariadne stayed in the little Pennsylvania town helping Kathleen, who was now her staunchest friend, nurse back to health and strength again Colonel Kirkwood, who was enabled to rejoin his regiment in the fall.

Ariadne was comfortable enough in body; she was not hungry nor ragged, as were her Southern sisters; but, oh, the anguish that she suffered at the thought that she wanted for nothing while they lacked all! That she was safe and happy and at ease while her husband was in deadly peril from the bullet or from disease, was a trial harder to bear and worse than

the privation of the siege. Thinking to spare her, he had laid the heaviest cross upon her. That she bore it was an evidence of her love for him.

Kathleen was consideration itself, love itself; but nothing, nothing, could make Ariadne feel at home. "Home is where the heart is," runs an old song, and her heart was with Grafton alone. Each bulletin of victory, each evidence of the slow death of the Confederacy, of the approaching end of the great struggle, the utter defeat of those who thought as she, filled her heart with sorrow.

Erect, undaunted still, she faced the future, but with little hope, save for Philip. Sometimes she awakened with horror to the fact that she was wishful for the end of it all in order that she might see her husband once more. She hungered and thirsted for him with her whole soul.

Women watched the bulletins of battle those days as they never scanned newspaper reports before or since, but none in the North watched them with such agonising intensity as Ariadne. So the slow months dragged away. In each one of them those two lovers lived a thousand years.

Now Philip loved his wife with all his heart and soul, and his heart was great and his soul was true; but he was a man and a soldier, and when he looked into the face of his captain, sitting there on his horse alone, on the little hill surveying woodland and meadow, from which the roar of battle rose, through which the smoke of battle wavered and drifted in the fitful breeze of that beautiful morning, he thought only of him. Indeed that army, the cause for which they had fought, had become Lee. He typified everything they had struggled for, every hope they had cherished, every dream they had dreamed, every vision they had seen. He was,

as he sat there that morning, the South in all its glory, in all its pride, in all its honour. The South, broken, beaten down, but undaunted; the South, winning eternal fame, evoking all men's respect and many men's love, in this hour of defeat.

A magnificent picture the general made. He was clad in a new and perfectly fitting uniform that had seen no service. The worn grey coat in which he had shared the privations of his men had been discarded. Compelled to abandon all personal baggage, each officer had put on his best uniform for a last effort to break through the grip of Grant. This was a uniform that had been kept for the moment of triumph; it was destined to grace the day of defeat.

Grafton was as ragged and tattered as any officer in the army. He had been absent on service when the baggage had been abandoned, and although Taylor and Venable had saved him his best suit, it had been lost in the wild scramble of the retreat. He was a scarecrow of an officer save for the purpose, the intelligence, that shone in his face. The men in that army were not estimated by clothing, and how a soldier dressed accounted for nothing if he fought, if he served—and Grafton did both.

Lee wore an exquisitely mounted sword, attached to a belt of Russia leather beautifully embroidered in gold. His abundant grey hair, soft and fine as silk, curled slightly on his neck. His full beard and moustache, trimmed rather short, covered his mouth. His ruddy face was bronzed and weather-beaten by the hard, rough campaigning. There was a mournful look in his deep brown eyes which alone indicated his despair. Yet, such was the strength with which this man ruled himself, that he gave little outward evidence of the anguish in his soul. Although his

heart was breaking he was a picture of iron composure.

As Grafton rode up he thought of how Lee had looked on that grey morning at Spottsylvania, when he had striven to lead the charge on the Union line; how his colour had mounted to his cheek, how his eye had flashed as with high look and heroic bearing, hat in hand, he had leaped his horse to the head of the column. And, Grafton thought, happier might it have been for this man if he had led the charge and died then and there on that bloody field. Yet he was to add the last leaf to the laurels of his fame by his courageous course on this day and the days that intervened between the end of the war and the end of his own fighting of the battle of life. Many a man is great in victory, greater in death; few are greatest in defeat. Of that few was Lee.

“Well, sir,” said the general, as Grafton halted to deliver his message, “what from Gordon?”

He had raced toward his captain as became a soldier, but now that he had to tell the message his lips refused to frame the words. Indeed, it was unnecessary, for his bearing told everything. Clenching his hands, with a choking voice he said at last:

“General, I will give you General Gordon’s exact words. ‘Tell General Lee I have fought my corps to a frazzle and I fear I can do nothing unless I am heavily supported by Longstreet’s corps.’”

Gordon knew, Grafton knew, every man in the army knew, that Longstreet’s corps was in like straits to that of Gordon. There was a long pause. Grafton could see the general’s lips straighten out under the pressure he put upon them. He threw up his head for a moment, as if seeking strength from above, then bent down. Presently he said softly

to himself, staring ahead of him, his look comprehending Grafton without seeing him:

“Then there is nothing left me but to go and see General Grant, and I had rather die a thousand deaths!”

Perhaps his mind, too, went back to that grey morning on the Spottsylvania hills. Perhaps he, too, pictured a great captain at rest on the soil of Virginia with a bullet in his breast, his heart's blood wetting the earth of the state he had loved with a passion passing the love of woman. But he had work to do. As he had wielded the baton of leadership in winning the laurels of victory, so now he must bear the burden of defeat. He must go to General Grant.

Lee was too great a man to delay when the inevitable was to be confronted. After that one ejaculation he turned and summoned a staff officer and dictated a brief note to General Grant, asking a meeting for the surrender of the army. He rode forward to that surrender at a dwelling house in the little village of Appomattox early that afternoon. Colonel Marshall, his military secretary, rode with him. Grafton had rented the jacket of a private soldier, which was in a fair state of repair, from a man who had recently joined the army after a long sick leave. He had paid him the last piece of gold he had in his pocket for the use of it, and with rare devotion he rode as the general's orderly to the conference.

He held the horses outside while Lee and Grant held that memorable interview, in which the dignity of the conquered was matched by the magnanimity of the conqueror; in which was given, perhaps, on both sides, the finest exhibition of American courtesy and American manhood that the world has seen.

He saw the Union soldiers standing at respectful salute as his general came out alone and stood in the doorway. He was near enough, as he brought his horse to Lee, to see him smite his hands together two or three times softly, the one gesture that he made as he waited the approach of old Traveller.

It was a silent, horrible ride that the three took back to the Confederate lines. Marshall whispered the terms to Grafton, and for the rest of the way they said nothing. They were right beside Lee when he entered the lines. They heard him say in a voice hoarse with emotion, choking and broken in spite of his superhuman efforts to preserve his calm:

“Men, we have fought through the war together; I have done the best I could for you.”

They saw those men crowd around Lee, those gaunt, ragged, hungry men, pressing upon his horse, laying their hands upon him, striving to get nearer to him, while tears streamed down their haggard cheeks and sobs shook their wasted breasts. It was the last scene of all that may be mentioned in the history of the great Army of Northern Virginia.

Grafton found the private soldier and offered him the coat, but the man refused to take it. He said that the gold piece he had received had more than paid for it. The officer must keep it. A few days after the surrender, the details having been completed and the paroles signed, Grafton, heavy-hearted, rode back to Richmond. He had left there four years before in the humblest station. In the twinkling of an eye military rank and its distinctions had been wiped out of what had been the Southern Confederacy, by the surrender at Appomattox, and he thought, ironically, that it was fitting that as he had gone forth, so he came back—in the jacket of a private soldier.

His heart was sad, and yet there was a lightness about it, the lightness that comes first of all from relief that the inevitable which had been impending has at last occurred; and the greater lightness that comes from the knowledge that the hope deferred is to be realised. He would go first to his own house. He had there, he remembered, some clothing which he would have given to his slaves four years ago; but since it was at least whole and decent, he would be glad to wear now. More fortunate than most of his comrades, he could still command a little money, gold, which had been saved from the wreck of his fortunes. Clothed and in his right mind, with the dreadful anxieties of the desperate struggle removed, he would soon see Ariadne. The war was over—he would claim her now. God! how he loved her!

So he rode through the prostrate, ruined city. There were soldiers in blue everywhere, but they did not molest him. He turned down the familiar streets which he had traversed so often under other circumstances. He had visited his home frequently during the Petersburg siege and had at last reinstated therein Aza and Aunt Dessy, who had made their way into Richmond after some marauders had burned the little house near Spottsylvania.

When the Confederates had evacuated Richmond Grafton had sent Jeff back to the old house, instructing him to wait there until he received word from him as to what he should do. He was not surprised, therefore, to see the house open and smoke coming from the chimney. It was early in the spring, and the magnolias were just beginning to bloom over the gate. He had never approached that gate without thinking of Ariadne standing there bidding him good-bye as he went to the war. He never ap-

proached it without a hope of seeing her again. Notwithstanding his assurance to the contrary, he half expected to see her there now. But she was not there. Of course she could not be, he thought, in disappointment most unreasoning.

He rode through the grounds up the driveway and dismounted before the porch. He was in a hurry; he wanted to get away to seek his wife. In addition to his parole he had a pass in his pocket from General Grant, which permitted him to go North. Kirkwood, who was now one of Sheridan's brigadiers, had secured it for him. Manning, now commanding a division of infantry, had been one of those left behind to guard Richmond. As Grafton stood at the foot of the porch two men came around the house. One was old Aza, the other Jeff.

"Gawd a'mighty!" cried Aza, "ef 'tain't Marse Phil."

"Howdy, Marse Phil!" cried Jeff, running forward to take his horse.

Grafton greeted them heartily, turned over the horse to Jeff, and told Aza that he wanted breakfast and a bath prepared in a hurry, for he was going North by the first train.

"I'm not giving you orders, 'Aza," he said, smiling; "the war is over and you are free."

"Marse Phil," protested the negro, with great gravity, "we-all b'long to you-all ev' sense we was bornded. We's gwine ter belong to you-all 't'well we dies. I doan want no freedom. An' Aunt Dessy she think de same way. We's gwine ter stay wid you des de same as befo'."

Jeff, however, said nothing. He was younger, and freedom had an alluring sound. Grafton laughed, mounted the steps, opened the door, and slipped into the hall with a careless word. That word was car-

ried up stairs; it pierced the fearful hollow of a maiden's ear. Grafton stood silent in the hall a moment. His merriment died away. He looked soberly about him and then prepared to ascend the stairs to the chambers above.

Something caught his eye. A hat—a woman's hat—lay on a table in the hall. A woman's cloak hung from the old-fashioned hat rack. They could not belong to Aunt Dessy. To whom then? Perhaps some Northern officer's wife had come down to . . . a door was opened above his head, he heard the patter of bare feet along the hall, a white-robed figure turned the corner of the stair. A laugh, a cry, and Ariadne was in his arms.

Kathleen Manning had brought her down to Richmond immediately after it was entered by the Union troops, and Ariadne had brought Kathleen to her home. There they had waited the end. Ariadne had been nearly frantic with anxiety at her utter inability to get news of her husband. She had been tossing on her bed after a sleepless night when she heard the horse on the gravel outside, the voice in the hall. In another moment she had rushed to him.

Ah, the war was over, and white-robed Ariadne was in the lucky soldier's arms, kissing him, clinging to him, laughing, crying, loving him in a delirium of happiness and joy at last.

POSTLUDE

THE PATH OF DUTY TO THE END

I BEGAN this veracious chronicle with the picture of Robert Lee, and I close it in the same way. Twice before death came to crown the end of that great life Grafton and his wife saw the general. The day after the meeting in Richmond, Grafton, in doubt, like many a young Southern soldier, as to his future course, went to Lee, from whom he had been wont to receive orders, and asked advice. Ariadne was with her husband, and they found Lee in his home in Richmond. They had last seen him together by the grave of an old friend. As they stood before him now it seemed as if they were confronting the grave of Virginia itself. His face lighted as he saw them.

“My dear child,” he said, taking Ariadne’s hands in both his own, “the end of the war has brought you together. I never had a chance to thank you for that magnificent ride in the Wilderness. There is no reward I can offer you now, save to tell you what you already know, that in your husband you have one of my bravest, most devoted, most able soldiers. He stood high in the Army of Northern Virginia, and there was much bravery, much devotion, much ability, displayed there.”

“I know what I have gained, General Lee,” exclaimed Ariadne, her eyes brimming with tears.

“And no one can know what happiness has come to me, General, except for our country,” said Grafton, quickly.

"You are well mated," said the general. "And now you know that we are all poor, but won't you let me help you a little on your honeymoon? You see, I knew both of your fathers, and . . ." He took out a pitifully small roll of bills, greenbacks. There were perhaps ten dollars in that roll. "I will divide with you," he said, smiling as if the absurdity of his poverty was the only thing that affected him.

Grafton put out his hand.

"No, sir," he cried; "I would take it in a moment if I needed it, but I have saved a little from the wreck of my fortune. And friends have come to my assistance. Indeed, if I might offer. . . ."

But the general shook his head. He could give, but he could not receive—that was one of the penalties of greatness and high station.

"I thank you, but I shall do very well," he said; "and you will need all you have. What do you propose to do?"

"I have come to you for advice, sir. I could go abroad or . . ."

"Your first duty," said Lee impressively, "is to your wife now." Ariadne had had to wait long enough for that sentence, but she was happier for the delay when it came. "Your next is to Virginia," continued the general. "There was a time when we reversed that, Mrs. Grafton; not that we loved our wives any the less." Ariadne nodded. She understood. "Virginia needs her sons, now," Lee went on. "More than ever does she need them now. Almost any man can be a good soldier; it takes a good man to be a good citizen. We must commence life over again and serve the state in peaceful ways as we have done with arms."

"You are right, sir," said Grafton. "We were

born here; we'll live here and die here when the time comes."

"I intend to remain," said the general. "Many of my soldiers have been to see me. Numbers of them had resolved upon self-banishment. In every instance I have urged them to stay here and repair the fortunes of their state."

A drum had been throbbing, a bugle shrilling, down the street as they talked, unheeding them. The music was so near now that they could no longer disregard it. The general lifted his head; his eyes kindled at the martial sound.

"What troops are those?" he questioned, stepping involuntarily toward the broad open window, whither Grafton and Ariadne followed him. As they had stood long ago, youth with its purpose, age with its knowledge, the woman between, they stood then staring out upon a starry flag, the flag of the United States. Their flag now, they thought sadly, with the blue St. Andrew's Cross in the red field, that they had followed in many a battle, furled forever—but not forgotten!

A Federal division was going by. Cavalry, infantry, artillery. They marched with free, splendid step, those bronzed well-clad, well-armed veterans. Lee looked at them with an eye full of appreciation and with a shadow of envy, without bitterness, as he thought of his own worn and wasted men. The officer riding at the head of the column caught sight of him, recognised him. Instinctively he raised his sword. Blades were bared in the morning air, arms crashed to the front of the marching men. It was the last salute of the men in blue to the leader of the men in grey. Those men in blue knew him; they had fought him for four years. They



" Youth with its purpose, age with its knowledge, the woman between, they stood then staring out upon a starry flag, the flag of the U. S."

could tell a man and soldier when they came face to face with one.

The general bowed his head, waited a moment and turned away. Without a word he held out his hands to the two. Philip shook one; Ariadne touched the other with her lips. Lee turned away, and they left him alone, walking up and down the great room, thinking, thinking, thinking . . .

Nearly six years after, those two, lovers still, stood in the chapel at Lexington, Virginia, and heard the words that committed the body of one of the greatest Americans of his day to the earth and rest at last. A few days before he had come home from a meeting of the vestry of the little church of which he was the chief support, and had stood at his dining table to invoke the blessing of that God in whom he had ever trusted, upon the evening meal, and had been stricken down. In his last days, ere death laid its hand upon him, his mind had reverted to the scenes of his glory, and, like Stonewall Jackson, his great subordinate, the name of one of his corps commanders, the most dependable man in the army, had been upon his lips. Scarcely could greater honour be vouchsafed a man's memory that he should linger last, like A. P. Hill, in the minds of Lee and Jackson.

On the banks of the Hudson, overlooking the greatest city in the world, rises a magnificent tomb. The ships of the nations sail by upon that river. Again and again on festive days the roar of cannon in salute awaken the echoes about the slumbering hero. Around the base of the monument trade and traffic, the tides of commerce, ebb and flow. Bearing upon its portal a noble phylactery that says, "Let

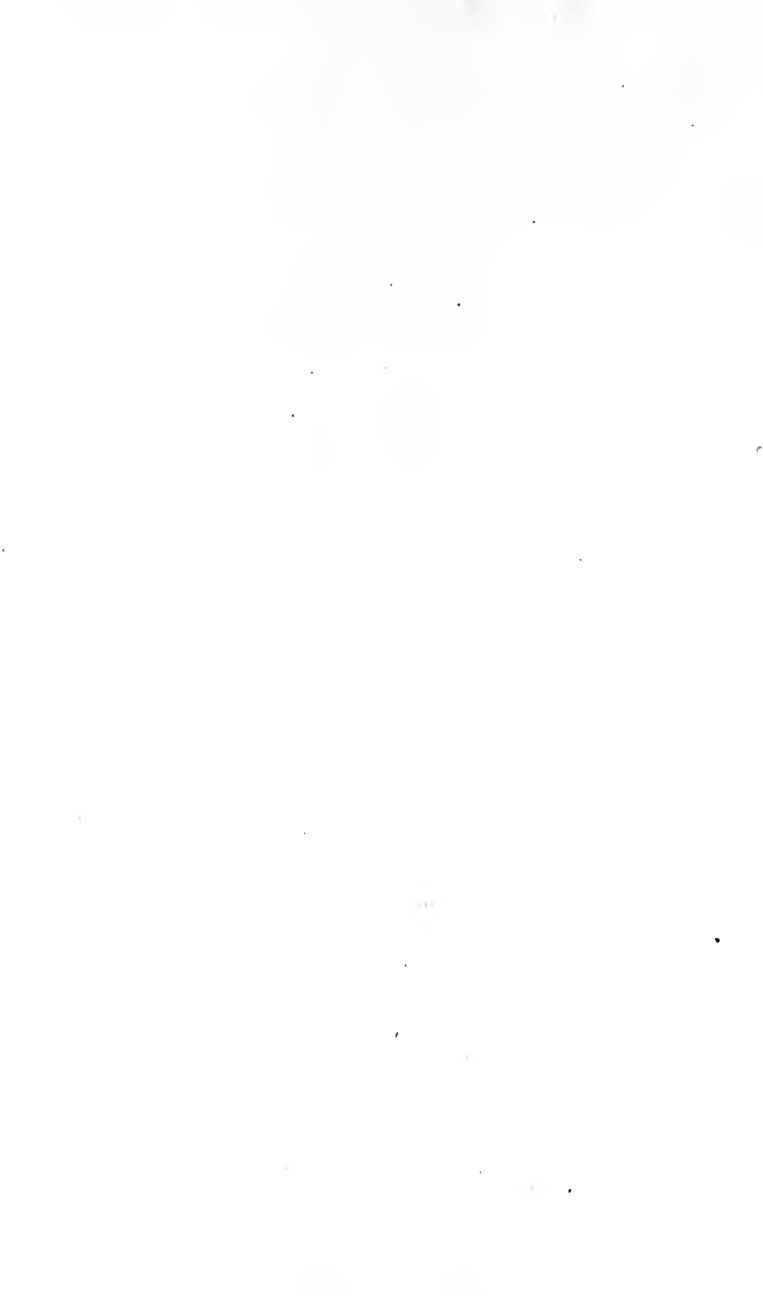
us have peace," it speaks to men of the mighty personality of Grant.

Far to the South in the Virginia hills in a little quiet spot in which he spent his last years, training the youth of his land to remember and forget—to forget the bitterness and remember the devotion of four years of strife—in a modest sepulchre rest the remains of Lee.

Somewhere beyond the stars, where the tumult and the shouting die, those men have met. Difficulties past, differences forgotten, they stand an inspiration for American manhood, American valour and American character. With them I seem to see another figure, the great-hearted, gaunt-faced, heroically gentle and generous Lincoln, stricken in the hour of victory, the greatest calamity of the four years of strife.

In the presence of Lincoln and Grant lives there a soul to-day who will say that Lee was not the peer of the highest, the noblest, the best on earth!

THE END



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 000 279 633 2

